MONTAGU

Her Life and Letters (1689–1762)

By

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Lady Suffolk and Her Circle

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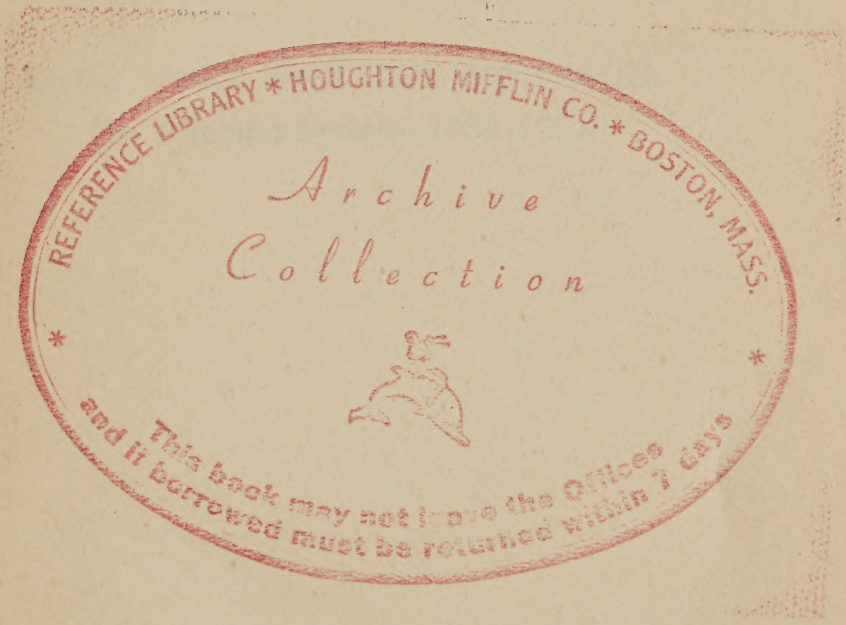
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Her Life and Letters (1689-1762)

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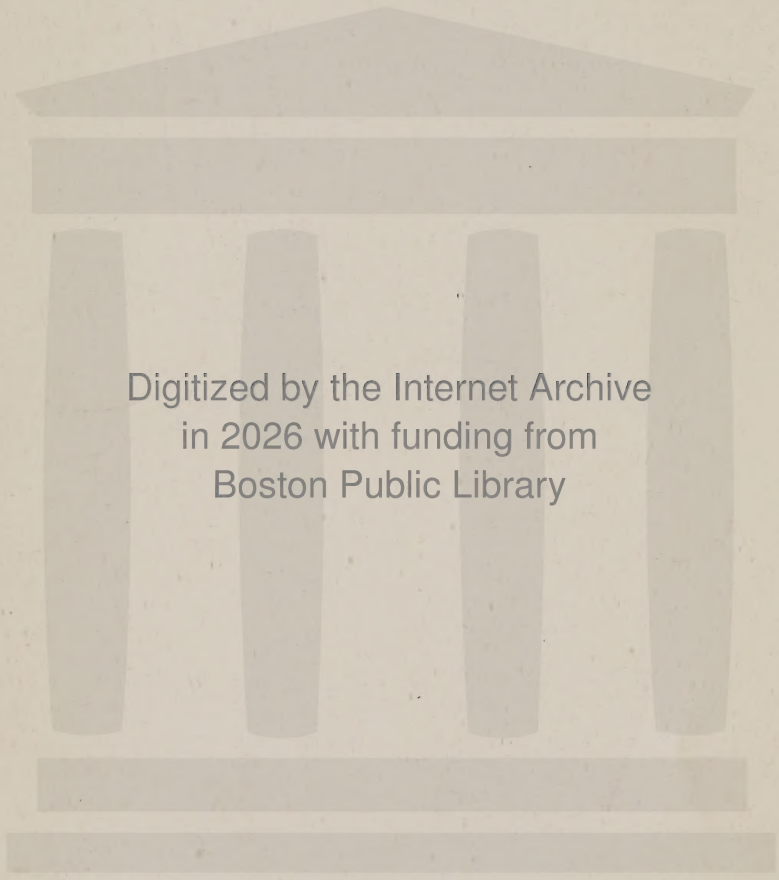
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LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU (AGE 8) AT THE KIT-CAT CLUB.

By Aubrey Hammond

Frontispiece.

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU:

Her Life and Letters (1689-1762)

By

LEWIS MELVILLE

WITH A FRONTISPIECE BY AUBREY HAMMOND, AND SIXTEEN OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

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To

EDITH AND JOHN CABOURN

PREFACE

LADY Mary Wortley Montagu has her niche in the history of medicine as having introduced inoculation from the Near East into England ; but her principal fame is as a letter-writer.

Of her gifts as a correspondent she was proud, and with reason. It was in all sincerity that in June, 1726, she wrote to her sister, Lady Mar : " The last pleasures that fell in my way was Madame Sévigné's letters : very pretty they are, but I assert, without the least vanity, that mine will be full as entertaining forty years hence. I advise you, therefore, to put none of them to the use of waste paper." And again, later in the year, she said half-humorously to the same correspondent : " I writ to you some time ago a long letter, which I perceive never came to your hands : very provoking ; it was certainly a *chef d'œuvre* of a letter, and worthy any of the Sévigné's or Grignan's, crammed with news." That Lady Mary's belief in herself was well founded no one has disputed. Even Horace Walpole, who detested her and made attacks on her whenever possible, said that " in most of her letters the wit and style are superior to any letters I have ever read but Madame de Sévigné's." A very pleasant tribute from one who had a goodly conceit of himself as a letter-writer.

Walpole, as a correspondent, was perhaps more sarcastic and more witty ; Cowper undoubtedly more tender and more gentle ; but Lady Mary had qualities all her own. She had powers of observation and the gift of description, which qualities are especially to be remarked in the letters she wrote when abroad with her husband on his Mission to the Porte. She had an ironic wit which gave point to the many society scandals she

narrated, a happy knack of gossip, and a style so easy as to make reading a pleasure.

Some of the incidents which Lady Mary retails with so much humour may be accepted as not outraging the conventions of the early eighteenth century when it was customary to call a spade a spade ; when gallantry was gallantry indeed, and the pursuit of it openly conducted. What is not mentioned by those who have written about her is that she was possessed of a particularly unsavoury strain of impropriety which outraged even the canons of her age. Some twenty years after her death, it was mentioned in the *Gentleman's Magazine* that Dr. Young, the author of *Night Thoughts*, had a little before his death destroyed a great number of her letters, assigning as a reason of his doing so that they were too indecent for public inspection. Only the other day I had confirmation of this from a distinguished man of letters who wrote to me : " I have somewhere hidden away a copy of a letter by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, which was sent to me by a well-known collector about thirty-five years ago, because he couldn't destroy it and wouldn't for worlds be found dead with it in his possession —so terrific is it in character. I'll tell you about it some day when we meet : I can't write it. In any case you couldn't use it or even refer to it. . . . I suppose that my friend quite felt that the document, however objectionable, should not, on literary grounds, be destroyed. What my executors will think of me for having it in my possession, the Devil only knows."

Whether this strain permeated the diary which Lady Mary left behind her when she eloped in 1712, and which was destroyed by one of her sisters, no one can say ; but it is a curious fact that the diary she kept in later years was destroyed by her devoted daughter, Lady Bute. " Though Lady Bute always spoke of Lady Mary with great respect," wrote Lady Louisa Stuart, " yet it might be perceived that she knew it had been too much her custom to note down and enlarge upon all the scandalous rumours of the day, without weighing their truth or

even their probability ; to record as certain facts stories that perhaps sprang up like mushrooms from the dirt, and had as brief an existence, but tended to defame persons of the most spotless character. In this age, she said everything got into print sooner or later ; the name of Lady Mary Wortley would be sure to attract curiosity ; and were such details ever made public, they would neither edify the world, nor do honour to her memory."

Lady Bute heard that her mother's letters were in existence, and, fearful of what they might contain, purchased them. "It is known that when on her way to die, as it proved, in her own country, Lady Mary gave a copy of the letters to Mr. Snowden, minister of the English church at Rotterdam, attesting the gift by her signature," Lady Louisa Stuart has written. "This showed it was her wish that they should eventually be published ; but Lady Bute, hearing only that a number of her mother's letters were in a stranger's hands, and having no certainty what they might be, to whom addressed, or how little of a private matter, could not but earnestly desire to obtain them, and readily paid the price demanded—five hundred pounds. In a few months she saw them appear in print. Such was the fact, and how it came about nobody at this time of day need either care or inquire."

With regard to other correspondence of Lady Mary, Sir Robert Walpole returned to her the letters she had written to his second wife, Molly Skerritt, after the death of that lady ; and when Lord Hervey died, his eldest son sealed up and sent her her letters, with an assurance that he had read none of them. To Lord Hervey's heir, Lady Louisa Stuart has mentioned, Lady Mary wrote a letter of thanks for his honourable conduct, adding that she could almost regret he had not glanced his eye over a correspondence which would have shown him what so young a man might perhaps be inclined to doubt—the possibility of a long and steady friendship subsisting between two persons of different sexes without the least mixture of love. Much pleased with this letter, he preserved it ; and,

when Lady Mary came to England, showed it to Lady Bute desiring she would ask leave for him to visit her mother."

It is to be presumed that Lady Mary, or her daughter, Lady Bute, destroyed these collections. For her part, Lady Mary returned letters that she had received from Lord Hervey, but only those that belonged to the last fourteen years of an acquaintance that had endured twice so long. These are for the greater number platonic in character, although there are a few phrases of a freer kind. Croker, who edited Lord Hervey's *Memoirs*, mentions that Hervey, answering one of her letters in 1737, in which she had complained that she was too old to inspire passion, after paying a compliment to her charms more gallant than decorous, said: "I should think anybody a great fool that said he liked spring better than summer merely because it is further from autumn, or that they loved green fruit better than ripe only because it was further from being rotten. I ever did, and believe ever shall, like women best—

> "Just in the noon of life—those golden days,
> When the mind ripens as the form decays."

Lady Mary was then in her forty-ninth year, being six years Hervey's senior.

Lady Louisa Stuart, writing in 1837—that is, seventy-five years after the death of her grandmother, Lady Mary—wrote indignantly of the attacks that had been made upon her ancestress. "The multitude of stories circulated about her—as about all people who were objects of note in their day—increase, instead of lessening, the difficulty," she said. "Some of these may be confidently pronounced inventions, simple and purely false; some, if true, concerned a different person; some were grounded upon egregious blunders; and not a few upon jests, mistaken by the dull and literal for earnest. Others, again, where a little truth and a great deal of falsehood were probably intermingled, nobody now living can pretend to confirm, or contradict, or unravel. Nothing is so readily believed, yet

nothing is usually so unworthy of credit, as tales learned from report, or caught up in casual conversation. A circumstance carelessly told, carelessly listened to, half comprehended, and imperfectly remembered, has a poor chance of being repeated accurately by the first hearer ; but when, after passing through the moulding of countless hands, it comes, with time, place, and person, gloriously confounded, into those of a bookmaker ignorant of all its bearings, it will be lucky indeed if any trace of the original groundwork remains distinguishable."

Lady Mary's most redoubtable assailants were Pope and Horace Walpole, and both were biassed. The story of Pope's quarrel with her is told in the following pages. Walpole, it has been suggested, disliked her much because she had championed his father's mistress, Molly Skerritt, against the mother to whom he was devoted. Pope, of course, knew her well ; but Walpole, who was twenty-eight years her junior, only met her in her late middle age. Walpole's prejudice was so great what when Lady Mary said, " People wish their enemies dead—but I do not, I say, give them the gout, give them the stone," he reported it solemnly.

Of course, it is not to be assumed that Lady Mary had not her full share of malice—she was undoubtedly well equipped with that useful quality—and she did not turn the other cheek when she was assailed. She could even stand up to the vitriolic Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, and stand up so effectively that they tacitly agreed to an armed neutrality that verged perilously upon friendship. The young Duke of Wharton sometimes beat her in open fight, but she harboured no very angry feelings towards him. As regards Pope, if it was not tit-for-tat with him, at least she gave him hard knocks. Pope, great poet as he was, never played fair in war.

" Lady Mary, quite contrary," she might have been dubbed, for she was frequently in trouble. The Rémond scandal, that will presently be unfolded, was a thing apart ; but her witty tongue made her many enemies and cost her many friends. Had the contents of her letters about London society become

known at the time, nearly every man's and all women's hands would have been against her. She had, in fact, little that was kind to say about people ; when she had, she usually refrained from mentioning it.

In this work Lady Mary's letters, either whole or in part, are given only in so far as they have biographical or historical value. At the same time I have, wherever possible, allowed Lady Mary to tell her story, or to give her impressions, in her own words. The quotations have been taken, by kind permission of Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., from the edition of the letters in their " Everyman Library " (edited by Mr. Ernest Rhys), with an introduction by Mr. R. Brimley Johnson.

The first edition of the letters appeared in three volumes in 1763, believed to have been edited by John Cleland. A fourth volume, issued in 1763, is regarded by Sir Leslie Stephen as of doubtful authenticity. James Dallaway, in 1803, brought out an enlarged collection and added to it the poems, and a second edition, with some new letters, appeared fourteen years later. Lady Mary's great-grandson, Lord Wharncliffe, edited the correspondence in 1837, and this, revised by Mr. Moy Thomas, was reprinted in 1861 and again in 1887.

There have been published selections from the correspondence by Mr. A. R. Ropes (1892) and by Mr. Hannaford Bennett (1923).

The principal authorities for the life of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu are the Memoirs of James Dallaway prefixed to an edition of the *Works* (1803) and the *Introductory Anecdotes* in a new edition (1837) by Lady Louisa Stuart, the daughter of Lady Bute and the granddaughter of Lady Mary. There is another account of Lady Mary by the late Moy Thomas in revised editions of the letters and writings (1861 and 1887). Sir Leslie Stephen was responsible for the memoir in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. In 1907 appeared *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and her Times*, by that sound authority on the eighteenth century, " George Paston," who was so fortunate as to discover many scores of letters hitherto unpublished.

Other sources of information are to be found in Pope's Correspondence, Spence's *Anecdotes*, Dilke's *Papers of a Critic*, Cobbett's *Memorials of Twickenham*, the Stuart MSS. at Windsor Castle, the MSS. of the Duke of Beaufort, and the Lindsay MSS.

My thanks—though not, perhaps, the thanks of my readers—are especially due to that ripe scholar Mr. Hannaford Bennett, who suggested this work to me. I am indebted to Mr. M. H. Spielmann and other friends and correspondents for information and suggestions. Finally, I must acknowledge the valuable assistance of Mrs. E. Constance Monfrino in the preparation of this biography.

LEWIS MELVILLE.

London,
March, 1925.

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Lady Mary Wortley Montagu :
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CHAPTER I

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MARY PIERREPONT, afterwards Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, was born in May, 1689, and was baptised on the twenty-sixth day of that month at St. Paul's, Covent Garden. In the register is the entry : "Mary, daughter of Evelyn Pierrepoint, Esquire, and Lady Mary, his wife."

The event, it may be remarked, was not one of any considerable social interest, for the Hon. Evelyn Pierrepont was merely a younger son and remote from the succession to the Earldom of Kingston.

The Pierreponts of Holme Pierrepont were a Nottinghamshire family of considerable antiquity, though of no particular

distinction. One Robert Pierrepont, who was born in 1584, the son of Sir Henry by Frances, sister of William, first Earl of Devonshire, was the first of the family upon whom a peerage was bestowed. He was created in 1627 Baron Pierrepont of Holme Pierrepont and Viscount Newark, and in the following year was elevated to the dignity of Earl of Kingston-upon-Hull, Co. York. A zealous royalist, he was in 1643 appointed Lieutenant-General of the King's forces in the counties of Lincoln, Rutland, Huntingdon, Cambridge, and Norfolk, and soon after taking up this command was accidentally shot near Gainsborough, when being carried off in a pinnace as a prisoner to Hull by the Parliamentary Army. He married in 1601 Gertrude, eldest daughter and co-heir of Sir William Reyner, of Orton Longueville, Co. Huntingdon. She survived her husband six years.

The second Earl was Henry Pierrepont, who was born in 1607. From 1628, when his father was given the earldom, he was known under the style of Viscount Newark. In that year he was elected Member of Parliament for Nottingham, and he represented that constituency until 1641, when he was summoned to the House of Lords in his father's barony as Lord Pierrepont. He, too, was an ardent supporter of the King, and was a member of His Majesty's Council of War at Oxford. He was created Marquess of Dorchester in 1645. After the Restoration he was in high favour at Whitehall. He was Commissioner of Claims at the Coronation of Charles II, and in 1662 and again in 1673 he acted as Joint Commissioner of the office of Earl Marshal. He was twice married, but had no direct heirs, and on his death in 1680 the marquessate became extinct.

The earldom passed to the family of the younger brother of the last holder. This was the great grandfather of Lady Mary, William Pierrepont, who deservedly earned the title of "Wise William." He sided with the Parliament, and during the Long Parliament, in the proceedings of which he took an active part, he sat for Great Wenlock. He was one of the

Commissioners selected to treat with Charles in 1642, and after the failure to open negotiations he was anxious to retire from public affairs. However, he was persuaded not to resign, and in 1644 was appointed one of the Committee of both Kingdoms. He became a leader of the independent party, and did not always see eye to eye with Cromwell. He quarrelled with his party, disapproving of its attitude towards Purge's Pride and the trial of the King. After this he took little part in politics, though the Protector sought, and he gave on occasions, his advice. In February, 1660, he was elected to the new Council of State at the head of the list, and in the Convention Parliament represented Nottingham. In the negotiations with Charles II he was a moderating influence. Afterwards, he retired into private life. He died in 1678 or 1679. His eldest son, Robert, who married Elizabeth, daughter of Sir John Evelyn, predeceased his father, dying in 1666, and the earldom passed to his eldest son, Robert, who died unmarried in 1682. The title then went to his next brother, William, who died without issue eight years later.

A younger brother of Robert and William, Evelyn Pierrepont, now succeeded as (fifth) earl. He was the father of Lady Mary. Born in 1665, he was returned to Parliament for East Retford in 1689, but his stay in the House of Commons was brief, for in the following year the peerage descended to him. In December, 1706, the higher dignity that had once been in his family was revived in his favour, and he was created Earl of Dorchester, with a special remainder, failing heirs male of his body, to his uncle Gervase Pierrepont, who had himself been raised to the peerage as Lord Pierrepont of Ardglass in Ireland and later was given the dignity of Lord Pierrepont of Hanslope in Buckinghamshire. Lord Pierrepont died in 1715, and both his titles became extinct.

The Marquess married Mary, daughter of William Feilding, third Earl of Denbigh, by his first wife, Mary, sister of John, first Baron of Kingston, in the peerage of Ireland. Lady Mary was, therefore, a relation of the novelist, Henry Fielding, whose

surname was spelt differently because, he explained, his branch of the family was the only one that could spell correctly.

Of this marriage, there was issue :

(i.) William, who took the style of Viscount Newark until 1706, and then was known as Earl of Kingston until his death in 1713, at the age of twenty-one. He had married before 1711 Rachel, daughter of Thomas Baynton, of Little Charfield, Wilts, who outlived her husband eight years. There was a son, Evelyn, who succeeded to the peerage.

(ii.) Lady Mary, the subject of this memoir.

(iii.) Lady Frances, who in 1714 became the second wife of John Erskine, sixth or eleventh Earl of Mar ; and

(iv.) Lady Evelyn, who married John, second Baron, and afterwards first Earl Gower, and died in June, 1727.

In the winter of 1697, when Lady Mary was eight years old, her mother died. After this, the little girl was allowed to run rather wild. Lord Kingston was very much a man about town and a gallant, and was too greatly occupied with his affairs and his parliamentary duties, which took him often from home, to concern himself about her education. In fact, before her mother's death, it would seem that Lady Mary spent months at her grandmother's, Mrs. Elizabeth Pierrepont, at her house at West Dean. When she was in her ninth year she returned to Holme Pierrepont, where, as she later complained, she was left " to the care of an old governess, who, though perfectly good and pious, wanted capacity."

Lady Mary early had a taste for books, and enjoyed to the full the library, where she no doubt read much that was good for her, and a good deal that was not. She read everything that she could lay her hands on, the old romances, poetry, and plays. One account has it that she was taught Greek and Latin by her brother's tutor ; but Sir Leslie Stephen was doubtful about the Greek and inclined to the belief that she taught herself Latin. Later, certainly, she taught herself Italian, and quoted Tasso in her letters. In her studies she was encouraged by her uncle, William Feilding, and also by Bishop Burnet, of

whom she said many years later: "I knew him in my very early youth, and his condescension in directing a girl in her studies is an obligation I can never forget." She had literary aspirations, and just after her twenty-first birthday she submitted to Burnet, with the following letter, a translation of "Encheiridion" of Epictetus from the Latin version. This will be found in the collected works.

"July 20, 1710.

"My Lord,

"Your hours are so well employed, I hardly dare offer you this trifle to look over; but then, so well am I acquainted with the sweetness of temper which accompanies your learning, I dare ever assure myself of a pardon. You have already forgiven me greater impertinencies, and condescended yet further in giving me instructions and bestowing some of your minutes in teaching me. This surprising humility has all the effect it ought to have on my heart; I am sensible of the gratitude I owe to so much goodness, and how much I am ever bound to be your servant. Here is the work of one week of my solitude—by the many faults in it your lordship will easily believe I spent no more time upon it; it was hardly finished when I was obliged to begin my journey, and I had not leisure to write it over again. You have it here without any corrections, with all its blots and errors: I endeavoured at no beauty of style, but to keep as literally as I could to the sense of the author. My only intention in presenting it, is to ask your lordship whether I have understood Epictetus? The fourth chapter, particularly, I am afraid I have mistaken. Piety and greatness of soul set you above all misfortunes that can happen to yourself, and the calumnies of false tongues; but that same piety which renders what happens to yourself indifferent to you, yet softens the natural compassion in your temper to the greatest degree of tenderness for the interests of the Church, and the liberty and welfare of your country: the steps that are now made towards the destruction of both, the apparent danger we are in, the manifest growth of injustice,

oppression, and hypocrisy, cannot do otherwise than give your lordship those hours of sorrow, which, did not your fortitude of soul, and reflections from religion and philosophy, shorten, would add to the national misfortunes, by injuring the health of so great a supporter of our sinking liberties. I ought to ask pardon for this digression ; it is more proper for me in this place to say something to excuse an address that looks so very presuming. My sex is usually forbid studies of this nature, and folly reckoned so much our proper sphere, we are sooner pardoned any excesses of that, than the least pretensions to reading or good sense. We are permitted no books but such as tend to the weakening and effeminating of the mind. Our natural defects are every way indulged, and it is looked upon as in a degree criminal to improve our reason, or fancy we have any. We are taught to place all our art in adorning our outward forms, and permitted, without reproach, to carry that custom even to extravagancy, while our minds are entirely neglected, and, by disuse of reflections, filled with nothing but the trifling objects our eyes are daily entertained with. This custom, so long established and industriously upheld, makes it even ridiculous to go out of the common road, and forces one to find as many excuses, as if it were a thing altogether criminal not to play the fool in concert with other women of quality, whose birth and leisure only serve to render them the most useless and most worthless part of the creation. There is hardly a character in the world more despicable, or more liable to universal ridicule, than that of a learned woman ; those words imply, according to the received sense, a talking, impertinent, vain, and conceited creature. I believe nobody will deny that learning may have this effect, but it must be a very superficial degree of it. Erasmus was certainly a man of great learning, and good sense, and he seems to have my opinion of it, when he says *Fœmina qui* [sic] *vere sapit, non videtur sibi sapere ; contra, quæ cum nihil sapiat sibi videtur sapere, ea demum bis stulta est.* The Abbé Bellegarde gives a right reason for women's talking overmuch : they know nothing, and every outward object strikes

their imagination, and produces a multitude of thoughts, which, if they knew more, they would know not worth their thinking of. I am not now arguing for an equality of the two sexes. I do not doubt God and nature have thrown us into an inferior rank, we are a lower part of the creation, we owe obedience and submission to the superior sex, and any woman who suffers her vanity and folly to deny this, rebels against the law of the Creator, and indisputable order of nature ; but there is a worse effect than this, which follows the careless education given to women of quality, its being so easy for any man of sense, that finds it either his interest or his pleasure, to corrupt them. The common method is, to begin by attacking their religion : they bring them a thousand fallacious arguments, which their excessive ignorance hinders them from refuting: and I speak now from my own knowledge and conversation among them, there are more atheists among the fine ladies than the loosest sort of rakes ; and the same ignorance that generally works out into excess of superstition, exposes them to the snares of any who have a fancy to carry them to t'other extreme. I have made my excuses already too long, and will conclude in the words of Erasmus :—*Vulgus sentit quod lingua Latina non convenit fœminis, quia parum facit ad tuendam illarum pundicitiam, quoniam rarum et insolitum est fœminam scire Latinam ; attamen consuetudo omnium malarum rerum magistra. Decorum est fœminam in Germania nata* [sic] *discere Gallice, ut loquatur cum his qui sciunt Gallice ; cur igitur habetur indecorum discere Latine, ut quotidie confabuletur cum tot autoribus tam facundis, tam eruditis, tam sapientibus, tam fides consultoribus. Certe mihi quantulumcunque cerebri est, malim in bonis studiis consumere, quam in precibus sine mente dictis, in pernoctibus conviviis, in exhauriendis, capacibus pateris, &c.*"

This was not the sort of letter that in the opening years of the eighteenth century even Bishops received from young ladies of rank, who usually took their pleasure in other and lighter ways. Lady Mary, however, loved to exercise her pen. She

later composed some imitations of Ovid, and tried her hand at one or two romances in the French manner. She thus acquired a facility of expression that stood her in good stead when she came to write those letters that constitute her principal claim to fame.

Lady Mary was an attractive child, and her father was very proud of her, especially when she was in what may be called the kitten stage. The story is told that, when she was about eight years old, he named her as a "toast" at the Kit-Cat Club, and as she was not known to the majority of the members he sent for her, where, on her arrival, she was received with acclamation by the Whig wits there assembled.

Sometimes Lady Mary in her girlhood stayed at Thoresby, and occasionally came up to her father's London house, which was in Arlington Street, which visits, accepting the story told by her granddaughter, Lady Louisa Stuart, cannot have been an unmixed delight. "Some particulars, in themselves too insignificant to be worth recording, may yet interest the curious, by setting before them the manners of our ancestors," Lady Louisa says. "Lord Dorchester, having no wife to do the honours of his table at Thoresby, imposed that task upon his eldest daughter, as soon as she had bodily strength for the office: which in those days required no small share. For this mistress of a country mansion was not only to invite—that is urge and tease—her company to eat more than human throats could conveniently swallow, but to carve every dish, when chosen, with her own hands. The greater the lady, the more indispensable the duty. Each joint was carried up in its turn, to be operated upon by her, and her alone; since the peers and knights on either hand were so far from being bound to offer their assistance, that the very master of the house, posted opposite her, might not act as her croupier, his department was to push the bottle after dinner. As for the crowd of guests, the most inconsiderable among them—the curate, or subaltern, or squire's younger brother—if suffered through her neglect to help himself to a slice of the mutton placed before him, would

have chewed it in bitterness and gone home an affronted man, half inclined to give a wrong vote at the next election. There were then professed carving-masters, who taught young ladies the art scientifically ; from one of whom Lady Mary said she took lessons three times a week that she might be perfect on her father's public days, when, in order to perform her functions without interruption, she was forced to eat her own dinner alone an hour or two beforehand."

CHAPTER II

GIRLHOOD (1703-1710)

Lady Mary makes the acquaintance of Edward Wortley Montagu—Montagu attracted by her looks and her literary gifts—Assists her in her studies—Montagu a friend of the leading men of letters of the day—Addison, Steele, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and others—The second volume of the *Tatler* dedicated to him by Steele—Montagu a staunch Whig—His paternal interest for Lady Mary does not endure—He becomes a suitor for her hand—Lady Mary's devotion and respect for him—Her flirtations—She and Montagu correspond through the medium of his sister, Anne—Lady Mary's mordant humour—Her delight in retailing society scandal—The death of Anne Wortley—Lady Mary and Montagu henceforth communicate direct—Her first letter to him.

At the age of fourteen the precocious Lady Mary, when on a visit to Wharncliffe Lodge, some thirty miles from Thoresby, made a conquest that was vastly to influence her life. The conquest was no less a person than Edward Wortley Montagu, son of Sidney Wortley Montagu, who was the second son of Edward, first Earl of Sandwich, the famous Admiral of Charles II. Sidney had taken the name of Wortley on his marriage to Anne, daughter of Sir Francis Wortley. To Sidney Wortley Montagu, of whom there is to-day little known, is an interesting reference in a letter from the Earl of Danby to his wife, dated from Kiveton, September 6, 1684: "I have had Mr. Montague with me—my Lord Sandwich his son—who lives at Wortley, and calls himself by that name, and is really a very fine gentleman and told me he was sorry that any of his relations—much more of his name—should have carried themselves so unjustly towards me, and he hoped I would not have the worse opinion of him for their ill-behaviour."

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

From a Picture by Sir Godfrey Kneller.

p. 32.

Edward Wortley Montagu, who was then twenty-five, was already a person of some distinction. He was a good classical scholar, acquainted with modern languages, and versed in what his grand-daughter, Lady Louisa Stuart, styled "polite literature." He was interested in the pretty, clever girl, and encouraged her to talk to him of her reading and writing. "When I was very young," she said, as is recorded in the *Anecdotes* of the Rev. Joseph Spence, "I was a great admirer of Ovid's 'Metamorphosis,' and that was one of the reasons that set me upon the thoughts of stealing the Latin language. Mr. Wortley was the only person to whom I communicated my design, and he encouraged me in it. I used to study five or six hours a day for two years in my father's library, and so got that language whilst everybody else thought I was reading nothing but novels and romances."

Montagu affected the company of men of letters. He was intimate with Addison, a close friend of Steele, and on terms with Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Garth, the author of *The Dispensary*. Steele, in fact, dedicated the second volume of the *Tatler* to him.

"SIR,

"When I send you this Volume, I am rather to make a Request than a Dedication. I must desire, that if you think fit to throw away any Moments on it, you would not do it after reading those excellent Pieces with which you are usually conversant. The Images which you will meet with here, will be very feint, after the Perusal of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, who are your ordinary Companions. I must confess I am obliged to you for the Taste of many of their Excellencies, which I had not observed till you pointed them to me. I am very proud that there are some things in these Papers which I know you pardon, and it is no small Pleasure to have one's Labours suffered by the Judgment of a Man who so well understands the true Charms of Eloquence and Poesie. But I direct this Address to you, not that I think I can entertain you with my Writings, but to

thank you for the new Delight I have from your Conversation in those of other men.

" May you enjoy a long Continuance of the true Relish of the Happiness Heaven hath bestowed on you. I know not how to say a more affectionate Thing to you, than to wish you may be always what you are, and that you may ever think, as I know you now do, that you have a much larger Fortune than you want. I am,

" Sir,

" Your most Obedient and most Humble Servant,

" ISAAC BICKERSTAFF."

Montagu was also interested in politics. He was a staunch Whig, and in favour with the leaders of his party. He sat in the House of Commons from 1705 to 1713 as member for Huntingdon, where there was family interest. It was not, however, until after the accession of George I that he held office.

At first, it may be, Montagu took some kind of paternal interest in Lady Mary. This attitude did not long endure. When the change in his feelings took place there is no means of knowing. He does not seem to have been a passionate man, nor a very ardent lover, but there is no doubt that at this period he inspired the girl with a very real devotion and respect, even though perhaps her heart was not deeply engaged.

Montagu would have had the girl find her pleasures exclusively in books and in his own conversation. She, at the age of twenty, on the other hand, was full of the joy of life and liked the various social pleasures that came her way. Naturally, she tried the effect of her good looks and wit on men. In fact, she was fond of flirting, and as it must probably have been impossible to flirt with Montagu, she indulged herself in that agreeable pastime with more than one other—to the great annoyance of that pompous prig of an admirer of hers. The following letter, dated September 5, 1709, written to Anne Wortley for her brother's perusal, was clearly an endeavour to sooth away the man's jealousy.

"September 5, 1709.

"My dear Mrs. Wortley, as she has the entire power of raising, can also, with a word, calm my passions. The kindness of your last recompenses me for the injustice of your former letter; but you cannot sure be angry at my little resentment. You have read that a man who, with patience, hears himself called heretic, can never be esteemed a good Christian. To be capable of preferring the despicable wretch you mention to Mr. Wortley, is as ridiculous, if not as criminal, as forsaking the Deity to worship a calf. Don't tell me any body ever had so mean an opinion of my inclinations; 'tis among the number of those things I would forget. My tenderness is always built upon my esteem, and when the foundation perishes, it falls: I must own, I think it is so with every body—but enough of this: you tell me it was meant for raillery—was not the kindness meant so too? I fear I am too apt to think what is amusement designed in earnest—no matter, 'tis for my repose to be deceived, and I will believe whatever you tell me.

"I should be very glad to be informed of a right method, or whether there is such a thing alone, but am afraid to ask the question. It may be reasonably called presumption in a girl to have her thoughts that way. You are the only creature that I have made my confidante in that case: I'll assure you, I call it the greatest secret of my life. Adieu, my dear, the post stays, my next shall be longer."

Lady Mary was probably more complaisant on paper than actually in her conduct of life. She desired male as well as female companionship; she liked the admiration and the flattery of men, and, no doubt, did her best to evoke it. It is strange, however, that with her beauty—for that she was in her early years beautiful has generally been accepted—she was not unduly attractive to men. It may be that her good looks brought young men to her feet, and that her tongue drove them away. In no age has a clever woman been very popular with the other sex, and in the early years of the eighteenth century, when girls

could do little more than read and write—and not always so much—wit such as hers and the readiness of reply with which she was gifted must have been a deterrent. What could the ordinary social butterfly think of a Lady Mary who had as a friend Mary Ansell, the author of a *Serious Proposal to Ladies*—what, though perhaps not one of them had read the book ?

Still, there was enough levity in Lady Mary's behaviour in society for her to think it desirable to make some explanation to Montagu.

" [Indorsed ' 9 April,' 1711.]

" I thought to return no answer to your letter, but I find I am not so wise as I thought myself. I cannot forbear fixing my mind a little on that expression, though perhaps the only insincere one in your whole letter—I would die to be secure of your heart, though but for a moment :—were this but true, what is there I would not do to secure you ?

" I will state the case to you as plainly as I can ; and then ask yourself if you use me well. I have shewed, in every action of my life, an esteem for you that at least challenges a grateful regard. I have trusted my reputation in your hands ; I have made no scruple of giving you, under my own hand, an assurance of my friendship. After all this, I exact nothing from you : if you find it inconvenient for your affairs to take so small a fortune, I desire you to sacrifice nothing to me ; I pretend no tie upon your honour : but, in recompence for so clear and so disinterested a proceeding, must I ever receive injuries and ill usage ?

" I have not the usual pride of my sex ; I can bear being told I am in the wrong, but tell it me gently. Perhaps I have been indiscreet ; I came young into the hurry of the world ; a great innocence and an undesigning gaiety may possibly have been construed coquetry and a desire of being followed, though never meant by me. I cannot answer for the [reflections] that may be made on me : all who are malicious attack the careless and defenceless : I own myself to be both. I

know not anything I can say more to shew my perfect desire of pleasing you and making you easy, than to proffer to be confined with you in what manner you please. Would any woman but me renounce all the world for one ? or would any man but you be insensible of such a proof of sincerity ? "

From an early age Lady Mary indulged her somewhat mordant humour, not less in her letters than in her conversation, and as that quality must have some subject upon which to exercise itself, she was generally on the look-out for some tit-bit of scandal which she could relate in her own inimitable manner.

" Next to the great ball, what makes the most noise is the marriage of an old maid, who lives in this street, without a portion, to a man of £7,000 *per annum*, and they say £40,000 in ready money," she wrote to Mrs. Hewet about the beginning of 1709. " Her equipage and liveries outshine anybody's in town. He has presented her with £3,000 in jewels ; and never was man more smitten with these charms that had lain invisible for these forty years ; but, with all his glory, never bride had fewer enviers, the dear beast of a man is so filthy, frightful, odious, and detestable. I would turn away such a footman, for fear of spoiling my dinner, while he waited at table. They were married on Friday, and came to church *en parade* on Sunday. I happened to sit in the pew with them, and had the honour of seeing Mrs. Bride fall fast asleep in the middle of the sermon, and snore very comfortably ; which made several women in the church think the bridegroom not quite so ugly as they did before. Envious people say 'twas all counterfeited to please him, but I believe that to be scandal ; for I dare swear, nothing but downright necessity could make her miss one word of the sermon. He professes to have married her for her devotion, patience, meekness, and other Christian virtues he observed in her ; his first wife (who has left no children) being very handsome, and so good natured as to have ventured her own salvation to secure his. He has married this lady to have a

companion in that paradise where his first has given him a title. I believe I have given you too much of this couple ; but they are not to be comprehended in few words."

Here is another malicious story that appealed to Lady Mary's wayward fancy.

" Mrs. Braithwayte, a Yorkshire beauty," she wrote to the same correspondent in March, 1712, "who had been but two days married to a Mr. Coleman, ran out of bed *en chemise*, and her husband followed her in his, in which pleasant dress they ran as far as St. James's Street, where they met with a chair, and prudently crammed themselves both into it, observing the rule of dividing the good and bad fortune of this life, resolved to run all hazards together, and ordered the chairmen to carry them both away, perfectly representing, both in love and nakedness, and want of eyes to see that they were naked, our first happy parents. Sunday last I had the pleasure of hearing the whole history from the lady's own mouth."

Love-affairs, other people's love-affairs anyhow, had an attraction for Lady Mary. " You talk of the Duke of Leeds," she wrote. " I hear that he has placed his heroic love upon the bright charms of a pewterer's wife ; and, after a long amour, and many perilous adventures, has stolen the fair lady, which, in spite of his wrinkles and grandchild, persuade people of his youth and gallantry." The nobleman in question, Peregrine Osborne, second Duke of Leeds, was then fifty-six—which, after all, regarded from the standpoint of to-day, is not such a great age as is suggested by the story.

If Montagu objected to the indiscretions of Lady Mary, it does not appear that he was in any hurry to get married to her. Of course, it may be—it is only fair to him to say—that Lady Mary held him temporarily at bay, preferring the frivolities of those of her own age to the austere attentions of one who acted as if he might have been her father.

For some years she and Montagu were apparently content with writing long letters to each other when they were not both in town. When the correspondence started is uncertain. The first letter of Lady Mary that has been preserved is dated Thoresby, May 2, 1709; but there can be no doubt that they had been in regular communication before then.

It is specially to be noted that the earlier letters of Lady Mary were addressed to Montagu's sister, Anne. It is evident, however, that they were definitely written for his perusal, and it is equally clear that Anne's replies were inspired, and sometimes, if not always, drafted by him. This practice continued until the death of Anne Wortley in March, 1710. Yet there seems to have been no reason for this camouflage. In 1709 Lady Mary was twenty years of age, and Montagu was a very eligible *parti*.

The respectful, highfalutin gallantry that is the key-note of the correspondence recalls the correspondence that presently was exchanged between Henrietta Howard, Countess of Suffolk, and the octogenarian Earl of Peterborough.

Some typical passages from the letters to "My dear Mrs. Wortley" may be given—it should be mentioned that it was the social custom of the day to address as "Mrs." maiden ladies as well as married women.

"Thoresby, August 8, 1709.

"I know no pretence I have to your good opinion but my hearty desiring it; I wish I had that imagination you talk of, to render me a fitter correspondent for you, who can write so well on every thing. I am now so much alone, I have leisure to pass whole days in reading, but am not at all proper for so delicate an employment as choosing you books. Your own fancy will better direct you. My study at present is nothing but dictionaries and grammars. I am trying whether it be possible to learn without a master; I am not certain (and dare hardly hope) I shall make any great progress; but I find the study so diverting I am not only easy, but pleased with the

solitude that indulges it. I forget there is such a place as London, and wish for no company but yours. You see, my dear, in making my pleasures consist of these unfashionable diversions, I am not of the number who cannot be easy out of the mode. I believe more follies are committed out of complaisance to the world, than in following our own inclinations—Nature is seldom in the wrong, custom always ; it is with some regret I follow it in all the impertinencies of dress ; the compliance is so trivial it comforts me ; but I am amazed to see it consulted even in the most important occasions of our lives ; and that people of good sense in other things can make their happiness consist in the opinions of others, and sacrifice every thing in the desire of appearing in fashion. I call all people who fall in love with furniture, clothes, and equipage, of this number, and I look upon them as no less in the wrong than when they were five years old, and doated on shells, pebbles, and hobby-horses: I believe you will expect this letter to be dated from the other world, for sure I am you never heard an inhabitant of this talk so before. I suppose you expect, too, I should conclude with begging pardon for this extreme tedious and very nonsensical letter ; quite contrary, I think you will be obliged to me for it. I could not better show my great concern for your reproaching me with neglect I knew myself innocent of, than proving myself mad in three pages."

"August 21, 1709.

"I am infinitely obliged to you, my dear Mrs. Wortley, for the wit, beauty, and other fine qualities, you so generously bestow upon me. Next to receiving them from Heaven, you are the person from whom I would chuse to receive gifts and graces: I am very well satisfied to owe them to your own delicacy of imagination, which represents to you the idea of a fine lady, and you have good nature enough to fancy I am she. All this is mighty well, but you do not stop there ; imagination is boundless. After giving me imaginary wit and beauty, you give me imaginary passions, and you tell me I'm in love : if I

am, 'tis a perfect sin of ignorance, for I don't so much as know the man's name: I have been studying these three hours, and cannot guess who you mean. I passed the days of Nottingham races, [at] Thoresby, without seeing or even wishing to see one of the sex. Now, if I am in love, I have very hard fortune to conceal it so industriously from my own knowledge, and yet discover it so much to other people. 'Tis against all form to have such a passion as that, without giving one sigh for the matter. Pray tell me the name of him I love, that I may (according to the laudable custom of lovers) sigh to the woods and groves hereabouts, and teach it to the echo. You see, being I am [*sic*] in love, I am willing to be so in order and rule: I have been turning over God knows how many books to look for precedents. Recommend an example to me; and, above all, let me know whether 'tis most proper to walk in the woods, encreasing the winds with my sighs, or to sit by a purling stream, swelling the rivulet with my tears; may be, both may do well in their turns:—but to be a minute serious, what do you mean by this reproach of inconstancy? I confess you give me several good qualities I have not, and I am ready to thank you for them, but then you must not take away those few I have. No, I will never exchange them; take back the beauty and wit you bestow upon me, leave me my own mediocrity of agreeableness and genius, but leave me also my sincerity, my constancy and my plain dealing; 'tis all I have to recommend me to the esteem either of others or myself. How should I despise myself if I could think I was capable of either inconstancy or deceit! I know not how I may appear to other people, nor how much my face may belie my heart, but I know that I never was or can be guilty of dissimulation or inconstancy—you will think this vain, but 'tis all that I pique myself upon. Tell me you believe me and repent of your harsh censure. Tell it me in pity to my uneasiness, for you are one of those few people about whose good opinion I am in pain. I have always took so little care to please the generality of the world, that I am never mortified or delighted by its reports

which is a piece of stoicism born with me ; but I cannot be one minute easy while you think ill of

" Your faithful—

"This letter is a good deal grave, and, like other grave things, dull ; but I won't ask pardon for what I can't help."

Was the sentiment expressed in the following letter, written about the same time as that printed above, intended for Anne or her brother, or both ?

" When I said it cost nothing to write tenderly, I believe I spoke of another sex ; I am sure not of myself : 'tis not in my power (I would to God it was !) to hide a kindness where I have one, or dissemble it where I have none. I cannot help answering your letter this minute, and telling you I infinitely love you, though, it may be, you'll call the one impertinence, and the other dissimulation ; but you may think what you please of me, I must eternally think the same things of you."

Lady Mary was occasionally wearisome owing to the reiteration of the assurance that she believed her letters to be dull, the more so as she certainly was conscious of the skill with which she composed them. " What do you mean by complaining I never write to you in the quiet situation of mind I do to other people ? " she asks Anne Wortley. " My dear, people never write calmly, but when they write indifferently."

After a letter dated September 5, 1709, a passage from which has been printed here, there is a break in the (preserved) correspondence. In the spring of the following year Anne Wortley died, and Lady Mary, on March 28, paid tribute to her departed friend, addressing herself for the first time direct to Montagu.

" Perhaps you'll be surprized at this letter ; I have had many debates with myself before I could resolve on it. I

know it is not acting in form, but I do not look upon you as I do upon the rest of the world, and by what I do for *you*, you are not to judge my manner of acting with others. You are brother to a woman I tenderly loved; my protestations of friendship are not like other people's, I never speak but what I mean, and when I say I love, 'tis for ever. I had that real concern for Mrs. Wortley, I look with some regard on every one that is related to her. This and my long acquaintance with you may in some measure excuse what I am now doing. I am surprized at one of the 'Tatlers' you send me; is it possible to have any sort of esteem for a person one believes capable of having such trifling inclinations? Mr. Bickerstaff has very wrong notions of our sex. I can say there are some of us that despise charms of show, and all the pageantry of greatness, perhaps with more ease than any of the philosophers. In contemning the world, they seem to take pains to contemn it; we despise it, without taking the pains to read lessons of morality to make us do it. At least I know I have always looked upon it with contempt, without being at the expense of one serious reflection to oblige me to it. I carry the matter yet farther; was I to choose of two thousand pounds a year or twenty thousand, the first would be my choice. There is something of an unavoidable *embarras* in making what is called a great figure in the world; [it] takes off from the happiness of life; I hate the noise and hurry inseparable from great estates and titles, and look upon both as blessings that ought only to be given to fools, for 'tis only to them that they are blessings. The pretty fellows you speak of, I own entertain me sometimes; but is it impossible to be diverted with what one despises? I can laugh at a puppet-show; at the same time I know there is nothing in it worth my attention or regard. General notions are generally wrong. Ignorance and folly are thought the best foundations for virtue, as if not knowing what a good wife is was necessary to make one so. I confess that can never be my way of reasoning; as I always forgive an *injury* when I think it not done out of malice, I

can never think myself *obliged* by what is done without design."

Lady Mary, who was now one-and-twenty, was no bread-and-butter miss. She knew her mind and had the gift to express herself, and in this same letter she very prettily rebukes her laggard lover.

" Give me leave to say it, (I know it sounds vain,) I know how to make a man of sense happy ; but then that man must resolve to contribute something towards it himself. I have so much esteem for you, I should be very sorry to hear you was unhappy ; but for the world I would not be the instrument of making you so ; which (of the humour you are) is hardly to be avoided if I am your wife. You distrust me—I can neither be easy, nor loved, where I am distrusted. Nor do I believe your passion for me is what you pretend it ; at least I am sure was I in love I could not talk as you do. Few women would have spoke so plainly as I have done ; but to dissemble is among the things I never do. I take more pains to approve my conduct to myself than to the world ; and would not have to accuse myself of a minute's deceit. I wish I loved you enough to devote myself to be for ever miserable, for the pleasure of a day or two's happiness. I cannot resolve upon it. You must think otherwise of me, or not at all."

" I don't enjoin you to burn this letter," she said in conclusion. " I know you will. 'Tis the first I ever writ to one of your sex, and shall be the last. You must never expect another. I resolve against all correspondence of the kind—my resolutions are seldom made and never broken."

Whatever happened to most of Lady Mary's resolutions, this one, at least, was not kept. Actually, Lady Mary was not quite so emancipated at this time of her life as she may have imagined. She never sent a letter, except in fear and trembling.

" I hazard a great deal if it falls into other hands, and I write for all that," was her constant cry. Yet, there was nothing in the correspondence, save the fact of it, to offend even a most austere maiden aunt of the day.

The correspondence, of course, continued. The lovers, if so they can be called, now indulged in a slightly acid academic discussion, or rather a number of slightly acid academic discussions, about marriage. It is evident that Montagu held strong views as to the duty of a wife ; so undoubtedly did Lady Mary—only, the trouble was, the views were by no means identical. If he were determined to set himself up as the strong loquacious man, his *fiancée* was certainly not prepared meekly to obey his behests in silence. They indulged in a somewhat candid examination of each other's character—and of their own. It is really rather amusing, this careful cold-blooded dissection of their feelings. It is a safe guess that at this game Lady Mary scored heavily.

" I wish, with all my soul, I thought as you do," she wrote on April 25, 1710. " I endeavour to convince myself by your arguments, and am sorry my reason is so obstinate, not to be deluded into an opinion, that 'tis impossible a man can esteem a woman. I suppose I should then be very easy at your thoughts of me ; I should thank you for the wit and beauty you give me, and not be angry at the follies and weaknesses ; but, to my infinite affliction, I can believe neither one nor t'other. One part of my character is not so good, nor t'other so bad, as you fancy it. Should we ever live together, you would be disappointed both ways ; you would find an easy equality of temper you do not expect, and a thousand faults you do not imagine. You think, if you married me, I should be passionately fond of you one month, and of somebody else the next : neither would happen. I can esteem, I can be a friend, but I don't know whether I can love. Expect all that is complaisant and easy, but never what is fond, in me. You judge very wrong of my heart, when you suppose me capable

of views of interest, and that anything could oblige me to flatter any body. Was I the most indigent creature in the world, I should answer you as I do now, without adding or diminishing. I am incapable of art, and 'tis because I will not be capable of it. Could I deceive one minute, I should never regain my own good opinion ; and who could bear to live with one they despised ? If you can resolve to live with a companion that will have all the deference due to your superiority of good sense, and that your proposals can be agreeable to those on whom I depend, I have nothing to say against them."

CHAPTER III

COURTSHIP, ELOPEMENT, AND MARRIAGE (1710-1712)

A lengthy courtship—Montagu a laggard lover—Lady Mary and Montagu exchange views on married life—Montagu proposes for her to Lord Dorchester—Dorchester refuses, since Montagu will not make settlements—Montagu's views on settlements expressed (by Steele) in the *Tatler*—Although not engaged, the young people continue to correspond—Lord Dorchester produces another suitor for his daughter—She consents to an engagement—The preparations for the wedding—She confides the whole story to Montagu—She breaks off the engagement—She and Montagu decide to elope—She runs up to London—Marriage—Lady Mary's diary destroyed by her sister, Lady Frances Pierrepont.

AFTER seven years or so of acquaintance, matters at last looked like coming to a head. It would appear that Montagu, tentatively at least, had put the question, because Lady Mary gives her views as to the life they should lead after marriage. She is not averse from travelling; she has no objection to leaving London; in fact, she would be willing to spend a few months in the country, if it so pleased him. It is all so extraordinarily unloverlike. There is too much philosophy about it. Love does not see so clearly.

"Where people are tied for life, 'tis their mutual interest not to grow weary of one another," she wrote on April 25, 1710. "If I had all the personal charms that I want, a face is too slight a foundation for happiness. You would be soon tired with seeing every day the same thing. Where you saw nothing else, you would have leisure to remark all the defects; which would increase in proportion as the novelty lessened, which is

always a great charm. I should have the displeasure of seeing a coldness, which, though I could not reasonably blame you for, being involuntary, yet it would render me uneasy ; and the more, because I know a love may be revived which absence, inconstancy, or even infidelity, has extinguished ; but there is no returning from a *dégoût* given by satiety."

Perhaps Lady Mary believed that, while it is well to hope for the best, it is sound policy to prepare for the worst.

Montagu may have found some comfort in the lady's assurance that if she had a choice between two thousand a year or twenty thousand a year she would choose the smaller income.

An apartment in London would satisfy Lady Mary. She would not choose to live in a crowd, but would like to have a small circle of agreeable people—she was very precise as to her desires : actually she wants to see eight or nine pleasant folk. She does not believe that she can find entire happiness in solitude, not even (or perhaps especially not) in a solitude of two ; and she is at least as sure that he would not either. Anyhow she has not the slightest intention of taking the chance.

It becomes increasingly clear that she had had about enough of this epistolary philandering, and she indicated this in no uncertain manner. " I will never think of anything without the consent of my family," she wrote. " Make no answer to this, if you can like me on my own terms. 'Tis not to me you must make the proposals ; if not, to what purpose is our correspondence ? "

And now comes a touch of the spur : " However, preserve me your friendship, which I think of with a great deal of pleasure. If ever you see me married, I flatter myself you'll see a conduct you would not be sorry your wife should imitate."

Even this did not bring Montagu to the point of asking Lord Dorchester for the hand of his daughter.

LADY MARY PIERREPONT.

1710.

Engraved from a Miniature.

p. 48.

The correspondence, however, still continued, and soon they were hard at it again.

"Kindness, you say, would be your destruction," she wrote in August, 1710. "In my opinion, this is something contradictory to some other expressions. People talk of being in love just as widows do of affliction. Mr. Steele has observed, in one of his plays, the most passionate among them have always calmness enough to drive a hard bargain with the upholders. I never knew a lover that would not willingly secure his interest as well as his mistress; or, if one must be abandoned, had not the prudence (among all his distractions) to consider, a woman was but a woman, and money was a thing of more real merit than the whole sex put together. Your letter is to tell me, you should think yourself undone if you married me; but if I would be so tender as to confess I should break my heart if you did not, then you'd consider whether you would or no; but yet you hoped you should not. I take this to be the right interpretation of—even your kindness can't destroy me of a sudden—I hope I am not in your power—I would give a good deal to be satisfied, &c.

"As to writing—that any woman would do that thought she writ well. Now I say, no woman of common sense would. At best, 'tis but doing a silly thing well, and I think it is much better not to do a silly thing at all. You compare it to dressing. Suppose the comparison just: perhaps the Spanish dress would become my face very well; yet the whole town would condemn me for the highest extravagance if I went to court in it, though it improved me to a miracle. There are a thousand things, not ill in themselves, which custom makes unfit to be done. This is to convince you I am so far from applauding my own conduct, my conscience flies in my face every time I think on't. The generality of the world have a great indulgence to their own follies: without being a jot wiser than my neighbours, I have the peculiar misfortune to know and condemn all the wrong things I do.

" You beg to know whether I would not be out of humour. The expression is modest enough ; but that is not what you mean. In saying I could be easy, I have already said I should not be out of humour: but you would have me say I am violently in love ; that is, finding you think better of me than you desire, you would have me give you a just cause to contemn me. I doubt much whether there is a creature in the world humble enough to do that. I should not think you more unreasonable if you was in love with my face, and asked me to disfigure it to make you easy. I have heard of some nuns that made use of that expedient to secure their own happiness ; but, amongst all the popish saints and martyrs, I never read of one whose charity was sublime enough to make themselves deformed, or ridiculous, to restore their lovers to peace and quietness. In short, if nothing can content you but despising me heartily, I am afraid I shall be always so barbarous to wish you may esteem me as long as you live."

At last Montagu formally approached Lord Dorchester, who had no objection whatever to him as a suitor for the hand of Lady Mary. They could not come to terms in the matter of settlements. Dorchester demanded that the estates should be put into entail. Also he desired that his future son-in-law should provide a town residence for Lady Mary. This did not seem unreasonable, but Montagu did not see his way to agree to them. He was willing enough to make all proper provision for his wife, but he declined absolutely to settle his landed property upon a son who, as he put it, for aught he knew, might prove unworthy to inherit it, who might be a spendthrift, an idiot, or a villain—as a matter of fact, the only son of the marriage turned out most things he should not. Anyhow, Montagu held strong views on the subject, and these he expounded to Richard Steele, who presented them in No. 223 of the *Tatler* (September 12, 1710).

" That this method of making settlements was first invented

by a griping lawyer, who made use of the covetous tempers of the parents of each side, to force two young people into these vile measures of diffidence for no other end, but to increase the skins of parchment, by which they were put into each other's possession out of each other's power. The law of our country has given an ample and generous provision for the wife, even the third of her husband's estate, and left to her good-humour and his gratitude the expectation of farther provision, but the fantastical method of going farther, with relation to the heirs, has a foundation in nothing but pride, and folly : for as all men with their children as like themselves, and as much better as they can possibly, it seems monstrous that we should give out of ourselves the opportunities of rewarding and discouraging them according to their defects. The wife institution has no more sense in it, than if a man should begin a deed with ' Whereas no man living knows how long he shall continue to be a reasonable creature, or an honest man, and whereas I.B. am going to enter into the state of matrimony with Mrs. D., therefore I shall from henceforth make it indifferent to me whether from this time forward I shall be a fool or knave. And therefore, in full and perfect health of body, and a sound mind, not knowing which of my children will prove better or worse, I give to my first-born, be he perverse, ungrateful, impious, or cruel, the lump and bulk of my estate, and leave one year's purchase only to each of my younger children, whether they shall be brave or beautiful, modest or honourable, from the time of the date hereof, wherein I resign my senses, and hereby promise to employ my judgment no farther in the distribution of my worldly goods from the date hereof, hereby farther confessing and covenanting, that I am henceforth married, and dead in law. . . .'

" How strangely men are sometimes partial to themselves, appears by the rapine of him, that has a daughter's beauty under his direction. He will make no scruple of using it to force from her lover as much of his estate, as is worth ten thousand pounds, and at the same time, as a justice on the bench, will

spare no pains to get a man hanged that has taken but a horse from him.

"It is to be hoped that the legislature will in due time take this kind of robbery into consideration, and not suffer men to prey upon each other when they are about making the most solemn league, and entering into the strictest bonds. The only sure remedy is to fix a certain rate on every woman's fortune, one price for that of a maid, and another for that of a widow: for it is of infinite advantage, that there should be no frauds or uncertainties in the sale of our women."

Unless Montagu were tactless beyond the general, the position as regards himself and Lord Dorchester must indeed have been hopeless before he inspired the paper in the *Tatler* on settlements. Anyhow, Montagu, who was used to having his way, and was probably very cross at being thwarted on this occasion, would not yield a step; and Lord Dorchester maintained his attitude that philosophic theories were all very well in their way, but he would not sanction a marriage that involved the risk of his grandchildren being left beggars.

Lady Mary was powerless in the matter, but, although her father said there was no engagement between her and Montagu, the young people continued their correspondence with unabated vigour.

"I am going to comply with your request, and write with all the plainness I am capable of," she replied in November, 1710, to one of Montagu's effusions. "I know what may be said upon such a proceeding, but am sure you will not say it. Why should you always put the worst construction upon my words? Believe me what you will, but do not believe I can be ungenerous or ungrateful. I wish I could tell you what answer you will receive from some people, or upon what terms. If my opinion could sway, nothing should displease you. Nobody ever was so disinterested as I am. I would not have to reproach myself (I don't suppose you would) that I had any way

made you uneasy in your circumstances. Let me beg you (which I do with the utmost sincerity) only to consider yourself in this affair ; and, since I am so unfortunate to have nothing in my own disposal, do not think I have any hand in making settlements. People in my way are sold like slaves ; and I cannot tell what price my master will put on me. If you do agree, I shall endeavour to contribute, as much as lies in my power, to your happiness. I so heartily despise a great figure, I have no notion of spending money so foolishly ; though one had a great deal to throw away. If this breaks off, I shall not complain of you : and as, whatever happens, I shall still preserve the opinion you have behaved yourself well. Let me entreat you, if I have committed any follies, to forgive them ; and be so just to think I would not do an ill thing."

Shortly afterwards, Lady Mary wrote again to Montagu. " I have tried to write plainly," she said ; and she did not have to reproach herself with failure. It had now come to a struggle for mastery, and she would not yield a foot of her ground.

" Indeed I do not at all wonder that absence, and variety of new faces, should make you forget me ; but I am a little surprised at your curiosity to know what passes in my heart (a thing wholly insignificant to you), except you propose to yourself a piece of ill-natured satisfaction, in finding me very much disquieted. Pray which way would you see into my heart ? You can frame no guesses about it from either my speaking or writing ; and, supposing I should attempt to show it you, I know no other way.

" I begin to be tired of my humility : I have carried my complaisances to you farther than I ought. You make new scruples ; you have a great deal of fancy ; and your distrusts being all of your own making, are more immovable than if there was some real ground for them. Our aunts and grandmothers always tell us that men are a sort of animals, that, if

even they are constant, 'tis only where they are ill used. 'Twas a kind of paradox I could never believe: experience has taught me the truth of it. You are the first I ever had a correspondence with, and I thank God I have done with it for all my life. You needed not to have told me you are not what you have been : one must be stupid not to find a difference in your letters. You seem, in one part of your last, to excuse yourself from having done me any injury in point of fortune. Do I accuse you of any ?

" I have not spirits to dispute any longer with you. You say you are not yet determined : let me determine for you, and save you the trouble of writing again. Adieu for ever ! make no answer. I wish, among the variety of acquaintance, you may find some one to please you ; and can't help the vanity of thinking, should you try them all, you won't find one that will be so sincere in their treatment, though a thousand more deserving, and every one happier. 'Tis a piece of vanity and injustice I never forgive in a woman, to delight to give pain ; what must I think of a man that takes pleasure in making me uneasy ? After the folly of letting you know it is in your power, I ought in prudence to let this go no farther, except I thought you had good nature enough never to make use of that power. I have no reason to think so : however, I am willing, you see, to do you the highest obligation 'tis possible for me to do ; that is, to give you a fair occasion of being rid of me."

There is now another break in the (preserved) correspondence until the end of February, 1711, and then Lady Mary, writing with more than a tinge of bitterness, broke off all relations with him—or, at least, affected to do so.

" I intended to make no answer to your letter ; it was something very ungrateful, and I resolved to give over all thoughts of you. I could easily have performed that resolve some time ago, but then you took pains to please me ; now you have

brought me to esteem you, you make use of that esteem to give me uneasiness; and I have the displeasure of seeing I esteem a man that dislikes me. Farewell then: since you will have it so, I renounce all the ideas I have so long flattered myself with, and will entertain my fancy no longer with the imaginary pleasure of pleasing you. How much wiser are all those women I have despised than myself! In placing their happiness in trifles, they have placed it in what is attainable. I fondly thought fine clothes and gilt coaches, balls, operas, and public adoration, rather the fatigues of life; and that true happiness was justly defined by Mr. Dryden (pardon the romantic air of repeating verses), when he says,

> 'Whom Heav'n would bless it does from pomps remove
> And makes their wealth in privacy and love.'

These notions had corrupted my judgment as much as Mrs. Biddy Tipkin's. According to this scheme, I proposed to pass my life with you. I yet do you the justice to believe, if any man could have been contented with this manner of living, it would have been you. Your indifference to me does not hinder me from thinking you capable of tenderness, and the happiness of friendship; but I find it is not to me you'll ever have them; you think me all that is detestable; you accuse me of want of sincerity and generosity. To convince you of your mistake, I'll show you the last extremes of both.

"While I foolishly fancied you loved me, (which I confess I had never any great reason for, more than that I wished it,) there is no condition of life I could not have been happy in with you, so very much I liked you—I may say loved, since it is the last thing I'll ever say to you. This is telling you sincerely my greatest weakness; and now I will oblige you with a new proof of generosity—I'll never see you more. I shall avoid all public places; and this is the last letter I shall send. If you write, be not displeased if I send it back unopened. I force my inclinations to oblige yours; and remember that you have told me I could not oblige you more than by

refusing you. Had I intended ever to see you again, I durst not have sent this letter. Adieu."

The above letter was evidently sent in a fit of pique. Certainly the position must have been almost unbearable to a young woman of spirit. Here was Lady Mary, in her twenty-second or twenty-third year, for all practical purposes betrothed, and her father and her lover quarrelling over settlements. Her friends were all getting married and having establishments of their own, and she more or less in disgrace, living at one or other of her father's houses.

Nothing came of her announcement that she desired no further relation with Montagu. She could not bring herself definitely to break with Montagu, and he would neither wed her nor give her up. The correspondence continued with unabated vigour.

" I am in pain about the letter I sent you this morning," she wrote in March, 1911. " I fear you should think, after what I have said, you cannot, in point of honour, break off with me. Be not scrupulous on that article, nor affect to make me break first, to excuse your doing it. I would owe nothing but to inclination : if you do not love me, I may have the less esteem of myself, but not of you : I am not of the number of those women that have the opinion of their persons Mr. Bayes had of his play, that 'tis the touchstone of sense, and they are to frame their judgment of people's understanding according to what they think of them.

" You may have wit, good humour, and good nature, and not like me. I allow a great deal for the inconstancy of mankind in general, and my own want of merit in particular. But 'tis a breach, at least, of the two last, to deceive me. I am sincere : I shall be sorry if I am not now what pleases ; but if I (as I could with joy) abandon all things to the care of pleasing you, I am then undone if I do not succeed.—Be generous."

It was about this time that she confided her troubles to

Mrs. Hewet. "At present, my domestic affairs go on so ill, I want spirits to look round," she wrote. "I have got a cold that disables my eyes and disorders me every other way. Mr. Mason has ordered me blooding, to which I have submitted, after long contestation. You see how stupid I am; I entertain you with discourses of physic, but I have the oddest jumble of disagreeable things in my head that ever plagued poor mortals; a great cold, a bad peace, people I love in disgrace, sore eyes, the horrid prospect of a civil war, and the thought of a filthy potion to take. I believe nobody ever had such a *mélange* before."

The unsatisfactory situation, apparently, might have continued indefinitely, for, even if Montagu had been more pressing, Lady Mary, in spite of her independent attitude, was most reluctant, indeed, almost determined, not to marry without her father's consent.

In the early summer of 1712, however, Lord Dorchester created a crisis. Thinking, perhaps, that his daughter might one day get out of hand and, in despair, defy him, he decided to find her a husband other than Montagu. At first, from a sense of weariness and from filial duty, Lady Mary inclined to obey the parental injunction—to her father's great delight. All the preparations for the wedding were put in train—then, ultimately, Lady Mary declared that she could not and would not go through with it on any terms. Who the bridegroom was she does not mention, but, in a manner somewhat involved, she in a letter in July, 1912, confided the whole story to Montagu.

"I am going to write you a plain long letter. What I have already told you is nothing but the truth. I have no reason to believe I am going to be otherwise confined than by my duty; but I, that know my own mind, know that is enough to make me miserable. I see all the misfortune of marrying where it is impossible to love; I am going to confess a weakness may perhaps add to your contempt of me. I wanted courage to resist at first the will of my relations; but, as every

day added to my fears, those, at last, grew strong enough to make me venture the disobliging them. A harsh word damps my spirits to a degree of silencing all I have to say. I knew the folly of my own temper, and took the method of writing to the disposer of me. I said everything in this letter I thought proper to move him, and proffered, in atonement for not marrying whom he would, never to marry at all. He did not think fit to answer this letter, but sent for me to him. He told me he was very much surprized that I did not depend on his judgment for my future happiness ; that he knew nothing I had to complain of, &c. ; that he did not doubt I had some other fancy in my head, which encouraged me to this disobedience ; but he assured me, if I refused a settlement he had provided for me, he gave me his word, whatever proposals were made him, he would never so much as enter into a treaty with any other ; that, if I founded any hopes upon his death, I should find myself mistaken, he never intended to leave me any thing but an annuity of £400 per annum ; that, though another would proceed in this manner after I had given so just a pretence for it, yet he had [the] goodness to leave my destiny yet in my own choice, and at the same time commanded me to communicate my design to my relations, and ask their advice. As hard as this may sound, it did not shock my resolution ; I was pleased to think, at any price, I had it in my power to be free from a man I hated. I told my intention to all my nearest relations. I was surprized at their blaming it, to the greatest degree. I was told, they were sorry I would ruin myself ; but, if I was so unreasonable, they could not blame my F. [father] whatever he inflicted on me. I objected I did not love him. They made answer, they found no necessity of loving ; if I lived well with him, that was all was required of me ; and that if I considered this town, I should find very few women in love with their husbands, and yet a many happy. It was in vain to dispute with such prudent people ; they looked upon me as a little romantic, and I found it impossible to persuade them that living in London at liberty was not the

height of happiness. However, they could not change my thoughts, though I found I was to expect no protection from them. When I was to give my final answer to ——, I told him that I preferred a single life to any other; and, if he pleased to permit me, I would take that resolution. He replied, he could not hinder my resolutions, but I should not pretend after that to please him; since pleasing him was only to be done by obedience; that if I would disobey, I knew the consequences; he would not fail to confine me, where I might repent at leisure; that he had also consulted my relations, and found them all agreeing in his sentiments. He spoke this in a manner hindered my answering. I retired to my chamber, where I writ a letter to let him know my aversion to the man proposed was too great to be overcome, that I should be miserable beyond all things could be imagined, but I was in his hands, and he might dispose of me as he thought fit. He was perfectly satisfied with this answer, and proceeded as if I had given a willing consent.—I forgot to tell you, he named you, and said, if I thought that way, I was very much mistaken; that if he had no other engagements, yet he would never have agreed to your proposals, having no inclination to see his grandchildren beggars.

"I do not speak this to endeavour to alter your opinion, but to shew the improbability of his agreeing to it. I confess I am entirely of your mind. I reckon it among the absurdities of custom that a man must be obliged to settle his whole estate on an eldest son, beyond his power to recall, whatever he proves to be, and make himself unable to make happy a younger child that may deserve to be so. If I had an estate myself, I should not make such ridiculous settlements, and I cannot blame you for being in the right.

"I have told you all my affairs with a plain sincerity. I have avoided to move your compassion, and I have said nothing of what I suffer; and I have not persuaded you to a *treaty*, which I am sure my family will never agree to. I can have no fortune without an entire obedience.

" Whatever your business is, may it end to your satisfaction. I think of the public as you do. As little as *that* is a woman's care, it may be permitted into the number of a woman's fears. But, wretched as I am, I have no more to fear for myself. I have still a concern for my friends, and I am in pain for your danger. I am far from taking ill what you say, I never valued myself as the daughter of ——, and ever despised those that esteemed me on that account. With pleasure I could barter all that, and change to be any country gentleman's daughter that would have reason enough to make happiness in privacy. My letter is too long. I beg your pardon. You may see by the situation of my affairs 'tis without design."

The marriage with the gentleman unknown was thus called off—to the very considerable anger of Lord Dorchester. Lord Pierrepont wrote offering to come to her aid, by representing to her father the hardship he was inflicting by endeavouring to force her inclination. He went so far as to say that he would assist her to marry a man of moderate means, if there were such an one in her heart. She was little used to sympathy, and the proposal affected her deeply. " The generosity and goodness of this letter wholly determines my softest inclinations on your side," she wrote with unusual gentleness to Montagu on a Thursday night in August. " You are in the wrong to suspect me of artifice ; plainly showing me the kindness of your heart (if you have any there for me) is the surest way to touch mine, and I am at this minute more inclined to speak tenderly to you than ever I was in my life—so much inclined I will say nothing. I could wish you would leave England, but I know not how to object to anything that pleases you. In this minute I have no will that does not agree with yours."

There is a reference in the letter just printed to a meeting of Lady Anne and Montagu, but how often they saw each other at this time there is no knowing.

However, it must have been in August that, failing the consent of Lord Dorchester to their marriage, they made up their minds to elope. From whom the suggestion first came, who can say ? Let it be hoped for the sake of maiden modesty it came from Montagu. What drove them to this step may well have been the fear that Lord Dorchester might, to all intents and purposes, imprison his daughter on one of his estates. Even at the eleventh hour, Lady Mary was determined that there should be no misunderstanding between her and her *fiancé*. She wrote to him saying that if she came to him in this way, she would come to him without a portion. To this part of her letter he vouchsafed no reply, so she again touched upon the matter.

" You made no reply to one part of my letter concerning my fortune. I am afraid you flatter yourself that my F. [father] may be at length reconciled and brought to reasonable terms I am convinced, by what I have often heard him say, speaking of other cases like this, he never will. The fortune he has engaged to give with me, was settled on my B. [brother]'s marriage, on my sister and on myself ; but in such a manner, that it was left in his power to give it all to either of us, or divide as he thought fit. He has given it all to me. Nothing remains for my sister, but the free bounty of my F. [father] from what he can save ; which, notwithstanding the greatness of his estate, may be very little. Possibly, after I have disobliged him so much, he may be glad to have her so easily provided for, with money already raised ; especially if he has a design to marry himself, as I hear. I do not speak this that you should not endeavour to come to terms with him, if you please ; but I am fully persuaded it will be to no purpose."

Lady Mary assured Montagu that Lord Dorchester's attitude was this : She had consented to an engagement with another man, that she had let him incur an expenditure of some four hundred pounds for a trousseau, and that, by breaking it

off, had made him look foolish. In fact, her father, she added, had given her clearly to understand that he would entertain no dealings whatsoever with any suitor other than the one of his choice, that he would send her to his estate in the north of England, and that it was his intention to leave her, on his death, only an annuity of four hundred pounds.

As a good sportsman she at the last moment gave Montagu a chance to retreat.

" He [my father] will have a thousand plausible reasons for being irreconcileable, and 'tis very probable the world will be of his side. Reflect now for the last time in what manner you must take me. I shall come to you with only a night-gown and petticoat, and that is all you will get with me. I told a lady of my friends what I intended to do. You will think her a very good friend when I tell you she has proffered to lend us her house if we would come there the first night. I did not accept of this till I had let you know it. If you think it more convenient to carry me to your lodgings, make no scruple of it. Let it be where it will : if I am your wife I shall think no place unfit for me where you are. I beg we may leave London next morning, wherever you intend to go. I should wish to go out of England if it suits with your affairs. You are the best judge of your father's temper. If you think it would be obliging to him, or necessary for you, I will go with you immediately to ask his pardon and his blessing. If that is not proper at first, I think the best scheme is going to the Spa. When you come back, you may endeavour to make your father admit of seeing me, and treat with mine (thought I persist in thinking it will be to no purpose). But I cannot think of living in the midst of my relations and acquaintance after so unjustifiable a step :—unjustifiable to the world,—but I think I can justify myself to myself. I again beg you to hire a coach to be at the door early Monday morning, to carry us some part of our way, wherever you resolve our journey shall be. If you determine to go to that lady's house, you had better come with a coach

and six at seven o'clock to-morrow. She and I will be in the balcony that looks on the road : you have nothing to do but to stop under it, and we will come down to you. Do in this what you like best. After all, think very seriously. Your letter, which will be waited for, is to determine everything. I forgive you a coarse expression in your last, which, however, I wish had not been there. You might have said something like it without expressing it in that manner ; but there was so much complaisance in the rest of it I ought to be satisfied. You can shew me no goodness I shall not be sensible of. However, think again, and resolve never to think of me if you have the least doubt, or that it is likely to make you uneasy in your fortune. I believe to travel is the most likely way to make a solitude agreeable, and not tiresome : remember you have promised it."

Even in this hour of excitement Lady Mary did not lose her head, and she asked for a settlement that would make her easy in her mind.

" 'Tis something odd for a woman that brings nothing to expect anything ; but after the way of my education, I dare not pretend to live but in some degree suitable to it. I had rather die than return to a dependancy upon relations I have disobliged. Save me from that fear if you love me. If you cannot, or think I ought not to expect it, be sincere and tell me so. 'Tis better I should not be yours at all, than, for a short happiness, involve myself in ages of misery. I hope there will never be occasion for this precaution ; but, however, 'tis necessary to make it. I depend entirely on your honour, and I cannot suspect you of any way doing wrong. Do not imagine I shall be angry at anything you can tell me. Let it be sincere ; do not impose on a woman that leaves all things for you."

No woman could be more sensible than was Lady Mary at

this time, and she gave expression to the most exemplary sentiments.

"A woman that adds nothing to a man's fortune ought not to take from his happiness. If possible I would add to it; but I will not take from you any satisfaction you could enjoy without me."

"If we marry, our happiness must consist in loving one another: 'tis principally my concern to think of the most probable method of making the love eternal."

"There is one article absolutely necessary—to be ever beloved, one must be ever agreeable."

"Very few people that have settled entirely in the country but have grown at length weary of one another. The lady's conversation generally falls into a thousand impertinent effects of idleness, and the gentleman falls *in* love with his dogs and horses and *out* of love with everything else."

And so on.

Possibly if Lady Mary had had less brains and more passion, if she had not so calmly worked out the permutations and combinations of married life, the alliance might have been more successful. She, with all her intelligence, did not seem to realise that matrimony is not an affair of rules and regulations, of aphorisms and epigrams, nor that the lines on which husband and wife shall conduct themselves to a happy ending can be settled by a study of vulgar fractions.

Anyhow, the plunge was at last taken—with some not unnatural trepidation on the part of the twenty-three-year-old bride. On Friday night, August 15, 1712, she wrote to Montagu:

"I tremble for what we are doing.—Are you sure you will love me for ever? Shall we never repent? I fear and I hope. I forsee all that will happen on this occasion. I shall incense my family in the highest degree. The generality of the world will blame my conduct, and the relations and friends of —— will invent a thousand stories of me; yet, 'tis possible, you

may recompense everything to me. In this letter, which I am fond of, you promise me all that I wish. Since I writ so far, I received your Friday letter. I will be only yours, and I will do what you please.

" You shall hear from me again to-morrow, not to contradict, but to give some directions. My resolution is taken. Love me and use me well."

The wedding licence is dated August 16, and the marriage took place in a day or two.

The bride had the active assistance of her uncle, William Feilding, who may have been present at the ceremony ; and the full sympathy of her brother, Lord Kingston, who, however, did not accompany her, perhaps deeming it impolitic to quarrel with his father.

The family must have thought that Lord Dorchester would examine Lady Mary's papers, for her sister, Lady Frances destroyed all she could find, including, unfortunately, a diary that Lady Mary had kept for several years.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY MARRIED LIFE (1712-1714)

An uneventful existence—Montagu's Parliamentary duties take him to London—Lady Mary stays mostly in the country—Correspondence—Montagu a careless husband, but very careful of his money—Later he becomes a miser—Lady Mary does not disguise the tedium of her existence—Concerning a possible reconciliation with her father—Lord Pierrepont of Hanslope—Lord Halifax—Birth of a son, christened after his father, Edward Wortley Montagu—The mother's anxiety about his health—Family events—Lady Evelyn Pierrepont marries Baron (afterwards Earl) Gower—Lady Frances Pierrepont marries the Earl of Mar—Lord Dorchester marries again—Has issue, two daughters—the death of Lady Mary's brother, William—His son, Evelyn, in due course succeeds to the Dukedom of Kingston—Elizabeth Chudleigh—The political situation in 1714—The death of Queen Anne—The accession of George I—The unrest in the country—Lady Mary's alarm for her son.

THE records for the first years of the married life of Edward and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu are scanty indeed. From the wedding day until 1716, when they went abroad, Lady Mary's life was, for months together, as uneventful as that of the ordinary suburban housewife. Montagu's parliamentary duties took him frequently to town, and kept him there for prolonged periods, during which he certainly showed no strong desire for her to join him. Lady Mary, indeed, spent most of the time in the country. Sometimes she stayed at the seat of her father-in-law, Wharncliffe Lodge, near Sheffield; occasionally she visited Lord Sandwich at Hinchinbrooke; for a while they stayed at Middlethorpe, in the neighbourhood of Bishopthorpe and York. From time to time they hired houses in other parts of Yorkshire.

The honeymoon lasted from August until October, 1712, when Montagu had to go to Westminster.

The first letter of this period is dated characteristically: "Walling Wells, October 22, which is the first post I could write, Monday night being so fatigued and sick I went straight to bed from the coach." It starts:

"I don't know very well how to begin; I am perfectly unacquainted with a proper matrimonial stile. After all, I think 'tis best to write as if we were not married at all. I lament your absence, as if you were still my lover, and I am impatient to hear you are got safe to Durham, and that you have fixed a time for your return."

Marriage made Lady Mary more human. She no longer dwelt upon the various points that in her maidenhood days she had thought would be conducive to happiness in matrimonial life; she was now, anyhow for the moment, in love with her husband, or at least persuaded herself that this was the case, and was at pains to inform him of the fact.

"I have not been very long in this family; and I fancy myself in that described in the 'Spectator,'" the letter of October 22 continues. "The good people here look upon their children with a fondness that more than recompenses their care of them. I don't perceive much distinction in regard to their merits; and when they speak sense or nonsense, it affects the parents with almost the same pleasure. My friendship for the mother, and kindness for Miss Biddy, make me endure the squalling of Miss Nanny and Miss Mary with abundance of patience: and my foretelling the future conquests of the eldest daughter, makes me very well with the family.—I don't know whether you will presently find out that this seeming impertinent account is the tenderest expressions of my love to you; but it furnishes my imagination with agreeable pictures of our future life; and I flatter myself with the hopes of one day enjoying with

you the same satisfactions ; and that, after as many years together, I may see you retain the same fondness for me as I shall certainly mine for you, and the noise of a nursery may have more charms for us than the music of an opera.

[*Torn*] " as these are the sure effect of my sincere love, since 'tis the nature of that passion to entertain the mind with pleasures in prospect ; and I check myself when I grieve for your absence, by remembering how much reason I have to rejoice in the hope of passing my whole life with you. A good fortune not to be valued !—I am afraid of telling you that I return thanks for it to Heaven, because you will charge me with hypocrisy ; but you are mistaken : I assist every day at public prayers in this family, and never forget in my private ejaculation how much I owe to Heaven for making me yours. 'Tis candle-light, or I should not conclude so soon.

" Pray, my dear, begin at the top, and read till you come to the bottom."

Montagu, for his part, was somewhat careless as regards correspondence—for which offence she rebuked him more than once, but in the most flattering manner.

" I am at present in so much uneasiness, my letter is not likely to be intelligible, if it all resembles the confusion of my head. I sometimes imagine you not well, and sometimes that you think of it small importance to write, or that greater matters have taken up your thoughts. This last imagination is too cruel for me. I will rather fancy your letter has miscarried, though I find little probability to think so. I know not what to think, and am very near being distracted, amongst my variety of dismal apprehensions. I am very ill company to the good people of the house, who all bid me make you their compliments. Mr. White begins your health twice every day. You don't deserve all this if you can be so entirely forgetful of all this part of the world. I am peevish with you by fits, and divide my time between anger and sorrow, which are equaly

troublesome to me. 'Tis the most cruel thing in the world, to think one has reason to complain of what one loves. How can you be so careless ?—is it because you don't love writing ? You should remember I want to know you are safe at Durham. I shall imagine you have had some fall from your horse, or ill accident by the way, without regard to probability ; there is nothing too extravagant for a woman's and a lover's fears. Did you receive my last letter ? if you did not, the direction is wrong, you won't receive this, and my question is in vain. I find I begin to talk nonsense, and 'tis time to leave off. Pray, my dear, write to me, or I shall be very mad."

Montagu was, not to put too fine a point on it, a careless husband. Not only did he neglect to write to his wife, but he neglected, or forgot, to keep her adequately supplied with money. She had more than once to remind him of this. " I wish you would write again to Mr. Phipps, for I don't hear of any money, and am in the utmost necessity for it," she told him in November, 1712. Montagu, even at this time a well-to-do man, found it difficult to part with his money. A couple of years later, Lady Mary had again to say to him : " Pray order me some money, for I am in great want, and must run into debt if you don't do it soon." Even in these days Montagu evidently had begun to be miserly. With all his riches, he never spent a crown when a smaller sum would suffice, and during most of his life he, as Sir Leslie Stephen put it, " devoted himself chiefly to saving money."

In the winter of 1712, Lady Mary, who was with child, suffered much from ill-health, and this was to some extent aggravated by intense boredom, although of that boredom she wrote good-humouredly enough.

" I don't believe you expect to hear from me so soon, if I remember you did not so much as desire it, but I will not be so nice to quarrel with you on that point ; perhaps you would laugh at that delicacy, which is, however, an attendant of a

tender friendship," she wrote to her husband from Hinchinbrooke at the beginning of December, 1712.

" I opened the closet where I expected to find so many books ; to my great disappointment there were only some few pieces of the law, and folios of mathematics ; my Lord Hinchingbrook and Mr. Twiman having disposed of the rest. But as there is no affliction, no more than no happiness, without alloy, I discovered an old trunk of papers, which to my great diversion I found to be the letters of the first Earl of Sandwich ; and am in hopes that those from his lady will tend much to my edification, being the most extraordinary lessons of economy that ever I read in my life. To the glory of your father, I find that *his* looked upon him as destined to be the honour of the family.

" I walked yesterday two hours on the terrace. These are the most considerable events that have happened in your absence ; excepting that a good-natured robin red-breast kept me company almost all the afternoon, with so much good humour and humanity as gives me faith for the piece of charity ascribed to these little creatures in the Children in the Wood, which I have hitherto thought only a poetical ornament to that history.

" I expect a letter next post to tell me you are well in London and that your business will not detain you long from her that cannot be happy without you."

Even in these early days of marriage Montagu seemed to have no love for domestic life, and often he stayed in London when he could have been in the country with his wife, or had her with him in town. " As much as you say I love the town, if you think it necessary for your interest to stay some time here, I would not advise you to neglect a certainty for an uncertainty ? but I believe if you pass the Christmas here, great matters will be expected from your hospitality : however, you are a better judge than I am." So Lady Mary wrote from Hinchinbrooke in the first week of December. She did not disguise from him the tedium of her existence.

"I continue indifferently well, and endeavour as much as I can to preserve myself from spleen and melancholy; not for my own sake; I think that of little importance; but in the condition I am, I believe it may be of very ill consequence; yet, passing whole days alone as I do, I do not always find it possible, and my constitution will sometimes get the better of my reason. Human nature itself, without any additional misfortunes, furnishes disagreeable meditations enough. Life itself to make it supportable, should not be considered too near; my reason represents to me in vain the inutility of serious reflections. The idle mind will sometimes fall into contemplations that serve for nothing but to ruin the health, destroy good humour, hasten old age and wrinkles, and bring on an habitual melancholy. 'Tis a maxim with me to be young as long as one can: there is nothing can pay one for that invaluable ignorance which is the companion of youth; those sanguine groundless hopes, and that lively vanity, which make all the happiness of life. To my extreme mortification I grow wiser every day than other [*sic*]. I don't believe Solomon was more convinced of the vanity of temporal affairs than I am; I lose all taste of this world, and I suffer myself to be bewitched by the charms of the spleen, though I know and foresee all the irremediable mischiefs arising from it. I am insensibly fallen into the writing you a melancholy letter, after all my resolutions to the contrary; but I do not enjoin you to read it: make no scruple of flinging it into the fire at the first dull line. Forgive the ill effects of my solitude, and think me as I am,

"Ever yours."

There was still hope in the hearts of Lady Mary and her husband that it might be possible to effect a reconciliation with Lord Dorchester. Since apparently the Marquess was not directly approachable by either of them, they perforce had to seek an intermediary. Such an one, they trusted at one time, would be one of Lady Mary's relatives, Lord Pierrepont of Hanslope.

To this matter there are many allusions in the correspondence. "The Bishop of Salisbury writes me word that he hears my Lord Pierrepont declares very much for us," Lady Mary wrote from Hinchinbrooke early in December to her husband in town. "As the Bishop is no infallible prelate, I should not depend much on that intelligence; but my sister Frances tells me the same thing. Since it is so, I believe you'll think it very proper to pay him a visit, if he is in town, and give him thanks for the good offices you hear he has endeavoured to do me, unasked. If his kindness is sincere, 'tis too valuable to be neglected. However, the very appearance of it may be of use to us. If I know him, his desire of making my Father appear in the wrong, will make him zealous for us. I think I ought to write him a letter of acknowledgment for what I hear he has already done." Very shortly after, however, it appears that Lord Pierrepont was a broken reed upon which to rely. "I did not expect, Lady Mary said bitterly, "that my Lord Pierrepont would speak at all in our favour, much less show zeal upon that occasion, that never showed any in his life." You cannot put it plainer than that.

One who did really endeavour to bring about the resumption of friendly relations was Montagu's cousin, Charles Montagu, first Baron Halifax of Halifax, who was afterwards created first Earl of Halifax.

To judge from Lady Mary's comments, sometimes when Montagu did write it had been better he should not have done so.

"I am alone, without any amusements to take up my thoughts. I am in circumstances in which melancholy is apt to prevail even over all amusements, dispirited and alone, and you write me quarrelling letters," she rebuked him on one occasion.

"I hate complaining; 'tis no sign I am easy that I do not trouble you with my head-aches, and my spleen; to be reasonable one should never complain but when one hopes redress.

A physician should be the only confidant of bodily pains ; and for those of the mind, they should never be spoke of but to them that can and will relieve 'em. Should I tell you that I am uneasy, that I am out of humour, and out of patience, should I see you half an hour the sooner ? I believe you have kindness enough for me to be very sorry, and so you would tell me ; and things remain in their primitive state ; I chuse to spare you that pain ; I would always give you pleasure. I know you are ready to tell me that I do not ever keep to these good maxims. I confess I often speak impertinently, but I always repent of it. My last stupid letter was not come to you, before I would have had it back again had it been in my power ; such as it was, I beg your pardon for it."

In May, 1713, Lady Mary was delivered of a boy, who was christened after his father, Edward Wortley Montagu. Some account of his unsatisfactory career will be given in a later chapter. As an infant, he suffered from ill-health.

" I am in abundance of pain about our dear child : though I am convinced in my reason 'tis both silly and wicked to set one's heart too fondly on anything in this world, yet I cannot overcome myself so far as to think of parting with him with the resignation that I ought to do," the mother wrote from Middlethorpe at the end of July. " I hope and I beg of God he may live to be a comfort to us both. They tell me there is nothing extraordinary in want of teeth at his age, but his weakness makes me very apprehensive ; he is almost never out of my sight. Mrs. Behn says that the cold bath is the best medicine for weak children, but I am very fearful and unwilling to try any hazardous remedies. He is very cheerful and full of play."

" I hope the child is better than he was," she mentioned a little later ; " but I wish you would let Dr. Garth know he has a bigness in his joints, but not much ; his ankles seem chiefly to have a weakness. I should be very glad of his advice upon

it, and whether he approves rubbing them with spirits, which I am told is good for him." Then came more favourable news about young Edward. " I thank God this cold well agrees with the child ; and he seems stronger and better every day," Lady Mary was able to report. " But I should be very glad, if you saw Dr. Garth, if you asked his opinion concerning the use of cold baths for young children. I hope you love the child as well as I do ; but if you love me at all, you'll desire the preservation of his health, for I should certainly break my heart for him." Garth, it may be assumed, was the famous Samuel Garth, afterwards physician-in-ordinary to George I and author of *The Dispensary*. His views on cold baths for children of fifteen months have not been handed down to posterity by Lady Mary.

Meantime things were happening in the Pierrepont family. Lady Mary's sister, Lady Frances, had, on March 8, 1712, married John, second Baron Gower, who afterwards was created Earl Gower. Lady Mary's other sister, Lady Evelyn, on July 26, 1714, became the second wife of John Erskine, sixth or eleventh Earl of Mar of the Erskine line, who presently came into prominence as an adherent of the Pretender in the rebellion of '15, after which he fled the country. He was created Duke of Mar by the Pretender. Finally, the Marquess of Dorchester, being then in his fiftieth year, took for his second wife, on August 2, 1714, Lady Isabella Bentinck, fifth daughter of William, first Earl of Portland and his first wife, Anne, sister of Edward, first Earl of Jersey. There was issue of this marriage two daughters : Caroline, who married Thomas Brand, of Kempton, Hertfordshire ; and Anne, who died unmarried in 1739 at the age of twenty.

Already, on July 1, 1723, had died Lord Dorchester's only son and heir, William, who took the style of Earl of Kingston. He had married Rachel, daughter of Thomas Baynton, of Little Chalfield, Wiltshire, by whom he had one son, named Evelyn, after his grandfather, whom he succeeded in 1726 as the second Duke of Kingston.

EVELYN PIERREPONT, FIRST DUKE OF KINGSTON.

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The career of Evelyn was undistinguished. Born in 1711, his aunt, Lady Mary, said of him at the age of fifteen: "The Duke of Kingston has hitherto had so ill an education, 'tis hard to make any judgment of him; he has his spirit, but I fear will never have his father's sense. As young gentlemen go, 'tis possible he may make a good figure among them." Than which it would be unkind to say anything more cutting. Of course, honours came to him. He was created Knight of the Garter in 1741, in which year he was appointed a Lord of the Bedchamber. He rose to the rank of colonel in the army in 1745, and twenty-seven years later was promoted General; but it does not appear that he saw any service. The second Duke of Kingston will, however, always be remembered for his marriage in 1769 with the beautiful and notorious Elizabeth Chudleigh, who was nine years his junior. She had in 1744 married secretly Augustus John Hervey, afterwards sixth Earl of Bristol, who survived until December, 1779. She had long been living with the Duke, but in 1769 she obtained a divorce *a mensa et thoro*, which she believed erroneously annulled the marriage. The Duke died in 1773, when all his titles became extinct. His Duchess was in the following year tried before the House of Lords for bigamy, found guilty, but, pleading benefit of peerage, was discharged. Thus, she carried out the prognostication of Lord Chief Justice Mansfield, who had opposed the prosecution. "The arguments about the place of trial suggest to my mind the question about the propriety of any trial at all," he said in a debate in the House of Lords. "*Cui bono?* What utility is to be obtained? Suppose a conviction to be the result?—the lady makes your lordships a courtesy, and you return a bow." She survived, living on the continent, until 1788. As an epitaph for her there can be nothing better than a remark of Horace Walpole: "I can tell you nothing more extraordinary, nor would any history figure near hers. It shows genius to strike anything so new as her achievements. Though we have many uncommon personages, it is not easy for them to be so superiorly particular."

More generally interesting than these domestic matters was the political situation. Queen Anne's life had for some time been hanging in the balance. It was thought that she might linger for some time, but there was no hope of her recovery. The fight that was carried on between the supporters of the Hanoverian succession and the adherents of the Pretender is, of course, a matter of history. On August 5, 1714, came to the Elector of Hanover, James Craggs, junior, with a letter from the Privy Council, dated July 31, announcing the precarious state of Anne's health, and conveying assurances that in the event of her demise every precaution would be taken to safeguard the rights of George Lewis. The same night messengers arrived at Hanover from London with the news of the death of the Queen, who had passed away on July 31, shortly after the departure of Craggs.

During the interval between the proclamation of the accession of George I and his arrival, which did not take place until September 17, the country was in a disturbed state, and it is not unnatural that Lady Mary in Yorkshire was alarmed for the safety of herself and the child.

"I cannot forbear taking it something unkindly that you do not write to me, when you may be assured I am in a great fright, and know not certainly what to expect upon this sudden change," she wrote from Middlethorpe to Montagu. "The Archbishop of York has been come to Bishopthorpe but three days. I went with my cousin to-day to see the King proclaimed, which was done; the Archbishop walking next the Lord Mayor, all the country gentry following, with greater crowds of people than I believed to be in York, vast acclamations, and the appearance of a general satisfaction. The Pretender afterwards dragged about the streets and burned. Ringing of bells, bonfires, and illuminations, the mob crying Liberty and Property! and Long live King George! This morning all the principal men of any figure took post for London, and we are alarmed with the fear of attempts from Scotland, though all Protestants

here seem unanimous for the Hanover succession. The poor young ladies at Castle Howard are as much afraid as I am, being left all alone, without any hopes of seeing their father again (though things should prove well) this eight or nine months. They have sent to desire me very earnestly to come to them, and bring my boy; 'tis the same thing as pensioning in a nunnery, for no mortal man ever enters the doors in the absence of their father, who is gone post. During this uncertainty, I think it will be a safe retreat; for Middlethorpe stands exposed to plunderers, if there be any at all."

A day or two later this letter was followed by another:

"You made me cry two hours last night. I cannot imagine why you use me so ill; for what reason you continue silent, when you know at any time your silence cannot fail of giving me a great deal of pain; and now to a higher degree because of the perplexity that I am in, without knowing where you are, what you are doing, or what to do with myself and my dear little boy. However (persuaded there can be no objection to it), I intend to go to-morrow to Castle Howard, and remain there with the young ladies, 'till I know when I shall see you, or what you would command. The Archbishop and everybody else are gone to London. We are alarmed with a story of a fleet being seen from the coasts of Scotland. An express went from thence through York to the Earl of Mar. I beg you would write to me. 'Till you do I shall not have an easy minute. I am sure I do not deserve from you that you should make me uneasy. I find I am scolding, 'tis better for me not to trouble you with it; but I cannot help taking your silence very unkindly."

CHAPTER V

THE ACCESSION OF GEORGE I (1714)

Lady Mary shows an increasing interest in politics—She tries to incite her husband to be ambitious—Montagu not returned to the new Parliament—His lack of energy—Correspondence—The Council of Regency—The King commands Lord Townshend to form a Government—The Cabinet—Lord Halifax, First Lord of the Treasury—Montagu appointed a Lord Commissioner of the Treasury—Correspondence—The unsatisfactory relations between Lady Mary and Montagu.

At the time of the death of Queen Anne Lady Mary began to show an increased interest in politics, at least in so far as the career of Montagu was bound up with it. She began to try to persuade her husband to be, to some extent at least, ambitious. It may be that she was not happy at the thought of being married to a man who was regarded as a nonentity. She was always urging him to put his best foot forward. Sometimes she wrote to him as to a naughty child. "I am very much surprised that you do not tell me in your last letter that you have spoke to my Father," she said in August, 1714. "I hope after staying in the town on purpose, you do not intend to omit it. I beg you would not leave any sort of business unfinished, remembering those two necessary maxims, Whatever you intend to do as long as you live do as soon as you can ; and to leave nothing to be done by another that 'tis possible to do yourself. What sort of a man must Montagu have been at the age of thirty-six that his wife should deem it necessary to give him such first-aid advice ?

Montagu was evidently of a procrastinating turn of mind.

He had, as has been said, sat for Huntingdon in the House of Commons from 1705 until 1713. In the latter year Parliament was dissolved on August 8, but Montagu had made no definite plans as regards his future political career—for some reason or other his father reserved for himself the seat for Huntingdon. Montagu found no other constituency, and consequently did not sit in the new Parliament that assembled on the following November 11.

"I suppose you may now come in at Aldburgh, and I heartily wish you was in Parliament," Lady Mary wrote to him. "I saw the Archbishop [of York]'s list of the Lords Regents appointed, and perceive Lord Wharton is not one of them; by which I guess the new scheme is not to make use of any man grossly infamous in either party; consequently, those who have been honest in regard to both, will stand fairest for preferment. You understand these things much better than me; but I hope you will be persuaded by me and your other friends (who I don't doubt will be of opinion) that 'tis necessary for the common good for an honest man to endeavour to be powerful, when he can be the one without losing the first more valuable title; and remember that money is the source of power. I hear that Parliament sits but six months; you know best whether 'tis worth any expense or bustle to be in for so short a time."

Lady Mary's letters now contain many references to political affairs, anyhow in so far as they directly concern Montagu.

"I hope you are convinced I was not mistaken in my judgment of Lord Pelham; he is very silly but very good-natured. I don't see how it can be improper for you to get it represented to him that he is obliged in honour to get you chose at Aldburgh, and may more easily get Mr. Jessop chose at another place. I can't believe but you may manage it in such a manner, Mr. Jessop himself would not be against it, nor would he have so much reason to take it ill, if he should

not be chose, as you have after so much money fruitlessly spent. I dare say you may order it so that it may be so, if you talk to Lord Townshend about it, &c. I mention this, because I cannot think you can stand at York, or anywhere else, without a great expense. Lord Morpeth is just now of age, but I know not whether he'll think it worth while to return from travel upon that occasion. Lord Carlisle is in town, you may if you think fit make him a visit, and enquire concerning it. After all, I look upon Aldburgh to be the surest thing. Lord Pelham is easily persuaded to any thing, and I am sure he may be told by Lord Townshend that he has used you ill ; and I know he'll be desirous to do all things in his power to make it up. In my opinion, if you resolve upon an extraordinary expense to be in Parliament, you should resolve to have it turn to some account. Your father is very surprizing if he persists in standing at Huntingdon ; but there is nothing surprizing in such a world as this."

Later in August Lady Mary wrote again on the same subject, and this letter shows that she had been at pains to acquire some practical knowledge of borough-mongering.

" You seem not to have received my letters, or not to have understood them ; you had been chose undoubtedly at York, if you had declared in time ; but there is not any gentleman or tradesman disengaged at this time ; they are treating every night. Lord Carlisle and the Thompsons have given their interest to Mr. Jenkins. I agree with you of the necessity of your standing this Parliament, which, perhaps, may be more considerable than any that are to follow it ; but, as you proceed, 'tis my opinion, you will spend your money and not be chose. I believe there is hardly a borough unengaged. I expect every letter should tell me you are sure of some place ; and, as far as I can perceive you are sure of none. As it has been managed, perhaps it will be the best way to deposit a certain sum in some friend's hands, and buy some little Cornish borough:

it would, undoubtedly, look better to be chose for a considerable town; but I take it to be now too late. If you have any thoughts of Newark, it will be absolutely necessary for you to enquire after Lord Lexington's interest; and your best way to apply yourself to Lord Holdernesse, who is both a Whig and an honest man. He is now in town, and you may enquire of him if Brigadier Sutton stands there; and if not, try to engage him for you. Lord Lexington is so ill at the Bath, that it is a doubt if he will live 'till the election; and if he dies, one of his heiresses, and the whole interest of his estate, will probably fall on Lord Holdernesse.

"'Tis a surprise to me that you cannot make sure of some borough, when so many of your friends bring in several Parliament-men without trouble or expense. 'Tis too late to mention it now, but you might have applied to Lady Winchester, as Sir Joseph Jekyl did last year, and by her interest the Duke of Bolton brought him in for nothing; I am sure she would be more zealous to serve me than Lady Jekyl. You should understand these things better than me. I heard, by a letter last post, that Lady M. Montagu and Lady Hinchinbrook are to be Bedchamber Ladies to the Princess, and Lady Townshend Groom of the Stole. She must be a strange Princess if she can pick a favourite out of them; and as she will be one day Queen, and they say has an influence over her husband, I wonder they don't think fit to place women about her with a little common sense."

Again, in the middle of September Lady Mary returned to the subject of Montagu finding a seat in the House:

"I cannot be very sorry for your declining at Newark, being very uncertain of your success; but I am surprized you do not mention where you intend to stand. Dispatch, in things of this nature, if not a security, at least delay is a sure way to lose, as you have done, being easily chose at York, for not resolving in time, and Aldburgh, for not applying soon enough

to Lord Pelham. Here are people here had rather choose Fairfax than Jenkins, and others that prefer Jenkins to Fairfax; but both parties, separately, have wished to me you would have stood, with assurances of having preferred you to either of them. At Newark, Lord Lexington has a very considerable interest. If you have any thoughts of standing, you must endeavour to know how he stands affected; though I am afraid he will assist Brigadier Sutton, or some other Tory. Sir Matthew Jenison has the best interest of any Whig; but he stood last year himself, and will, perhaps, do so again. Newdigate will certainly be chose there for one. Upon the whole, 'tis the most expensive and uncertain place you can stand at. 'Tis surprizing to me, that you are all this while in the midst of your friends without being sure of a place, when so many insignificant creatures come in without any opposition. They say Mr. Strickland is sure at Carlisle, where he never stood before. I believe most places are engaged by this time. I am very sorry, for your sake, that you spent so much money in vain last year, and will not come in this, when you might make a more considerable figure than you could have done then. I wish Lord Pelham would compliment Mr. Jessop with his Newark interest, and let you come in at Aldburgh."

On the death of the Queen, the Council, which had assembled at Kensington Palace, adjourned to St. James's. By the Regency Bill the administration of the government (in the event of the King being absent from the realm at the time of his accession to the throne) devolved upon the holders for the time being of the Great Officers of State: the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Thomas Tenison), the Lord Chancellor (Simon, Lord Harcourt), the Lord President (John, Duke of Buckinghamshire), the Lord High Treasurer (Charles, Duke of Shrewsbury), the Lord Privy Seal (William, Earl of Dartmouth), the First Lord of the Admiralty (Thomas, Earl of Strafford), and the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench (Sir Thomas Parker, afterwards Earl of Macclesfield). Under another clause of the

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.
1720.

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Regency Act the Sovereign was entitled to nominate a number of Lords Justices. Baron von Bothmer, the Hanovarian Envoy Extraordinary to the Court of St. James's, opened the sealed packet containing the Commission of Regency, drawn up by George after the death of his mother. The King's nominees were the Archbishop of York, the Dukes of Shrewsbury,* Somerset, Bolton, Devonshire, Kent, Argyll, Montrose, and Roxborough ; the Earls of Pembroke, Anglesea, Carlisle, Nottingham, Abingdon, Scarborough, and Oxford ; Viscount Townshend ; and Barons Halifax and Cowper. Marlborough was not in the Commission, but he was appointed Captain-General of the Forces.

From The Hague, where he arrived on September 5, 1714, George I sent authority to Charles, Viscount Townshend, to form a Cabinet, with power to nominate his colleagues. Townshend took the office of Secretary of State for the Northern Department, and appointed James Stanhope Secretary of State for the Southern Department. Lord Halifax became First Lord of the Treasury ; Lord Cowper, Lord Chancellor ; the Earl of Nottingham, Lord President ; the Marquis of Wharton, Lord Privy Seal ; the Earl of Oxford, First Lord of the Admiralty ; the Earl of Sunderland, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland ; Robert Walpole, Paymaster-General of the Forces. As Captain-General Marlborough was in the Cabinet.

Lord Halifax, when making out the Commission of the Treasury, invited his cousin Montagu to be one of the Commissioners, although the latter had not secured a seat in Parliament. "It will be surprizing to add," says Lady Mary, "that he hesitated to accept it at a time when his father was alive and his present income very small ; but he had certainly refused it if he had not been persuaded to it by a rich old uncle of mine, Lord Pierrepont, whose fondness for me gave him expectations

* The Commission was, of course, made out before the Duke of Shrewsbury was given the White Staff, the possession of which made him a Lord Justice in virtue of his office.

of a large legacy." Lady Mary, though glad enough that her husband had been given a place, was not over and above delighted that it was one so modest.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to her Husband

[Enclosed, September 24, 1714.]

" Though I am very impatient to see you, I would not have you, by hastening to come down, lose any part of your interest. I am surprized you say nothing of where you stand. I had a letter from Mrs. Hewet last post, who said she heard you stood at Newark, and would be chose without opposition ; but I fear her intelligence is not at all to be depended on. I am glad you think of serving your friends ; I hope it will put you in mind of serving yourself. I need not enlarge upon the advantages of money ; every thing we see, and every thing we hear, puts us in remembrance of it. If it was possible to restore liberty to your country, or limit the encroachments of the prerogative, by reducing yourself to a garret, I should be pleased to share so glorious a poverty with you ; but as the world is, and will be, 'tis a sort of duty to be rich, that it may be in one's power to do good ; riches being another word for power, towards the obtaining of which the first necessary qualification is impudence, and (as Demosthenes said of pronunciation in oratory) the second is impudence, and the third, still, impudence. No modest man ever did or ever will make his fortune. Your friend Lord H[alifa]x, R. W[alpo]le, and all other remarkable instances of quick advancement, have been remarkably impudent. The Ministry is like a play at Court ; there's a little door to get in, and a great crowd without, shoving and thrusting who shall be foremost ; people who knock others with their elbows, disregard a little kick of the shins, and still thrust heartily forwards, are sure of a good place. Your modest man stands behind in the crowd, is shoved about by every body, his cloaths tore, almost squeezed to death, and sees a thousand get in before him, that don't make so good a figure as himself.

" I don't say it is impossible for an impudent man not to rise in the world; but a moderate merit, with a large share of impudence, is more probable to be advanced, than the greatest qualifications without it.

" If this letter is impertinent, it is founded upon an opinion of your merit, which, it if is a mistake, I would not be undeceived in: it is my interest to believe (as I do) that you deserve every thing, and are capable of every thing; but nobody else will believe you if they see you get nothing."

[Postmark, October 6, 1714.]

" I cannot imagine why you should desire that I should not be glad, though from a mistake, since, at least, it is an agreeable one. I confess I shall ever be of opinion, if you are in the Treasury, it will be an addition to your figure and facilitate your election, though it is no otherwise advantageous; and that, if you have nothing when all your acquaintance are preferred, the world generally will not be persuaded that you neglect your fortune, but that you are neglected."

[Endorsed, October 9, 1714.]

" You do me wrong in imagining (as I perceive you do) that my reason for being solicitous for your having that place, was in view of spending more money than we do. You have no cause of fancying me capable of such a thought. I don't doubt but Lord H[alifa]x will very soon have the Staff, and it is my belief you will not be at all the richer: but I think it looks well, and may facilitate your election; and that is all the advantage I hope from it. When all your intimate acquaintance are preferred, I think you would have an ill air in having nothing; upon that account only, I am sorry so many considerable places are disposed on [*sic*]. I suppose, now, you will certainly be chose somewhere or other; and I cannot see why you should not pretend to be Speaker. I believe all the Whigs would be for you, and I fancy you have a considerable interest

amongst the Tories, and for that reason would be very likely to carry it. 'Tis impossible for me to judge of this so well as you can do ; but the reputation of being thoroughly of no party, is (I think) of use in this affair, and I believe people generally esteem you impartial ; and being chose by your country is more honourable than holding *any* place from *any* king."

The relations between Lady Mary and her husband did not improve. Not only did he neglect to write to her when he left her in the country, but he does not at any time appear to have had any desire to have her with him in town. Lady Mary showed extreme, in fact overmuch, forbearance, but towards the end of November her patience gave out : " I cannot forbear any longer telling you, I think you use me very unkindly."

" I don't say so much of your absence, as I should do if you was in the country and I in London ; because I would not have you believe I am impatient to be in town, when I say I am impatient to be with you ; but I am very sensible I parted with you in July and 'tis now the middle of November," she went on to say. " As if this was not hardship enough, you do not tell me you are sorry for it. You write seldom, and with so much indifference as shews you hardly think of me at all. I complain of ill health, and you only say you hope 'tis not so bad as I make it. You never enquire after your child. I would fain flatter myself you have more kindness for me and him than you express ; but I reflect with grief a man that is ashamed of passions that are natural and reasonable, is generally proud of those that [are] shameful and silly."

Lady Mary, once having given vent to her feeling of injustice, was not concerned to mince her words : " You seem perfectly pleased with our separation, and indifferent how long it continues. . . . When I reflect on your behaviour, I am ashamed of my own : I think I am playing the part of my Lady Winchester. At least be as generous as My Lord ; and as he made

her early confession of his aversion, own to me your inconstancy, and upon my word I will give you no more trouble about it. . . . For my part, as 'tis my first, this is my last complaint, and your next of the kind shall go back enclosed to you in blank paper."

CHAPTER VI

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU'S ACCOUNT OF THE COURT OF GEORGE I

LADY MARY, then, had been in Yorkshire when the Queen died, and was still in the country, much against her will, when the King arrived on September 18. Soon after, however, she came to town, and, so to speak, looked around the Court. Her "Account of the Court of George I" is not always accurate, and is certainly often prejudiced. It is not the less interesting because the writer did not mince her words, even when discussing the character of her friend, "Dolly" Walpole. Notwithstanding, this bird-eye view of the royal and political circles at the accession of the first of the Hanoverian monarchs is so valuable as to deserve inclusion in this work.

"The new Court with all their train was arrived before I left the country. The Duke of Marlborough was returned in a sort of triumph, with the apparent merit of having suffered for his fidelity in the succession, and was reinstated in his office of general, &c. In short, all people who had suffered any hardship or disgrace during the late ministry would have it believed that it was occasioned by their attachment to the House of Hanover. Even Mr. Walpole, who had been sent to the Tower for a piece of bribery proved upon him, was called a confessor to the cause. But he had another piece of good luck that yet more contributed to his advancement, he had a very handsome sister, whose folly had lost her reputation in London; but the yet greater folly of Lord Townshend, who happened to be a neighbour in

Norfolk to Mr. Walpole, had occasioned his being drawn in to marry her some months before the Queen died.

"Lord Townshend had that sort of understanding which commonly makes men honest in the first part of their lives; they follow the instruction of their tutor, and, till somebody thinks it worth while to show them a new path, go regularly on in the road where they are set. Lord Townshend had then been many years an excellent husband to a sober wife, a kind master to all his servants and dependants, a serviceable relation whenever it was in his power, and followed the instinct of nature in being fond of his children. Such a sort of behaviour without any glaring absurdity, either in prodigality or avarice, always gains a man the reputation of reasonable and honest; and this was his character when the Earl of Godolphin sent him envoy to the States, not doubting but he would be faithful to his orders, without giving himself the trouble of criticising on them, which is what all ministers wish in an envoy. Robethon, a French refugee (secretary to Bernstorff, one of the Elector of Hanover's ministers), happened to be at The Hague, and was civilly received by Lord Townshend, who treated him at his table with the English hospitality; and he was charmed with a reception which his birth and education did not entitle him to. Lord Townshend was recalled when the Queen changed her ministry, his wife died, and he retired into the country, where (as I have said before) Walpole had art enough to make him marry his sister Dolly. At that time, I believe, he did not propose much more advantage by the match than to get rid of a girl that lay heavy on his hands.

"When King George ascended the throne, he was surrounded by all his German ministers and playfellows, male and female. Baron Goertz was the most considerable among them both for birth and fortune. He had managed the King's treasury, for thirty years, with the utmost fidelity and economy; and had the true German honesty, being a plain, sincere and unambitious man. Bernstorff, the Secretary, was of a different turn. He was avaricious, artful, and designing, and had

got his share in the King's councils by bribing his women. Robethon was employed in these matters, and had the sanguine ambition of a Frenchman. He resolved there should be an English ministry of his choosing ; and, knowing none of them personally but Townshend, he had not failed to recommend him to his master, and his master to the King, as the only proper person for the important post of Secretary of State ; and he entered upon that office with universal applause, having at that time a very popular character, which he might probably have retained for ever if he had not been entirely governed by his wife and her brother Robert Walpole, whom he immediately advanced to be Paymaster, esteemed a post of exceeding profit, and very necessary for his indebted estate.

" But he had yet higher views, or rather he found it necessary to move higher, lest he should not be able to keep that. The Earl of Wharton, now Marquis, both hated and despised him. His large estate, the whole income of which was spent in the service of the party and his own parts, made him considerable, though his profligate life lessened that weight that a more regular conduct would have given him.

" Lord Halifax, who was now advanced to the dignity of Earl, and graced with the Garter, and First Commissioner of the Treasury, treated him with contempt. The Earl of Nottingham, who had the real merit of having renounced the ministry in Queen Anne's reign, when he thought they were going to alter the succession, was not to be reconciled to Walpole, whom he looked upon as stigmatised for corruption.

" The Duke of Marlborough, who in his old age was making the same figure at Court that he did when he first came into it —I mean, bowing and smiling in the antechamber while Townshend was in the closet,—was not, however, pleased with the Walpole, who began to behave to him with the insolence of new favour, and his Duchess, who never restrained her tongue in her life, used to make public jokes of the beggary she first knew him in, when her caprice gave him a considerable place, against the opinion of Lord Godolphin and the Duke of Marlborough.

SARAH, DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH.
After the Portrait by Michael Dahl in the National Portrait Gallery.

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" To balance these, he had introduced some friends of his own, by his recommendation to Lord Townshend (who did nothing but by his instigation). Colonel Stanhope was made the Secretary of State. He had been unfortunate in Spain, and there did not want those who attributed it to ill conduct ; but he was called generous, brave, true to his friends, and had an air of probity which prejudiced the world in his favour.

" The King's character may be comprised in very few words. In private life he would have been called an honest blockhead ; and Fortune that made him a king, added nothing to his happiness, only prejudiced his honesty, and shortened his days. No man was ever more free from ambition ; he loved money, but loved to keep his own, without being rapacious of other men's. He would have grown rich by saving, but was incapable of laying schemes for getting ; he was more properly dull than lazy, and would have been so well contented to have remained in his little town of Hanover, that if the ambition of those about him had not been greater than his own, we should never have seen him in England ; and the natural honesty of his temper, joined with the narrow notions of a low education, made him look upon his acceptance of the crown as an act of usurpation, which was always uneasy to him. But he was carried by the stream of the people about him, in that, as in every action of his life. He could speak no English, and was past the age of learning it. Our customs and laws were all mysteries to him, which he neither tried to understand, nor was capable of understanding if he had endeavoured it. He was passively good-natured, and wished all mankind enjoyed quiet, if they would let him do so.

The mistress that followed him hither was so much of his own temper, that I do not wonder at the engagement between them. She was duller than himself, and consequently did not find out that he was so ; and had lived in that figure at Hanover almost forty years (for she came hither at three score) without meddling in any affairs of the Electorate, content with the small pension he allowed her, and the honour of his visits

when he had nothing else to do, which happened very often. She even refused coming hither at first, fearing that the people of England, who, she thought, were accustomed to use their kings barbarously, might chop off his head in the first fortnight ; and had not love or gratitude enough to venture being involved in his ruin. And the poor man was in peril of coming hither without knowing where to pass his evenings ; which he was accustomed to do in the apartments of women free from business. But Madame Keilmansegg saved him from this misfortune. She was told that Mademoiselle Schulenberg scrupled this terrible journey, and took the opportunity of offering her service to his Majesty, who willingly accepted it, though he did not facilitate it to her by the payment of debts, which made it very difficult for her to leave Hanover without permission of her creditors. But she was a woman of wit and spirit, and knew very well of what importance this step was to her fortune. She got out of the town in disguise, and made the best of her way in a post-chaise to Holland, from whence she embarked with the King, and arrived at the same time with him in England ; which was enough to make her called his mistress, or at least so great a favourite that the whole Court began to pay her uncommon respect.

" This lady deserves that I should be a little particular in her character, there being something in it worth speaking of. She was past forty ; she had never been a beauty, but certainly very agreeable in her person when adorned with youth ; and had once appeared so charming to the King, that it was said the divorce and ruin of his beautiful Princess, the Duke of Celle's daughter, was owing to the hopes her mother (who was declared mistress to the King's father, and all-powerful in his Court,) had of setting her daughter in her place ; and that project did not succeed, by the passion which Madame Kielmansegg took for M. Kielmansegg, who was a son of a merchant of Hamburg, and after having a child by him, there was nothing left for her but to marry him. Her ambitions ran mad with the disappointment, and died in that deplorable manner, leaving

£40,000 which she had heaped by the favour of the Elector, to this daughter, which was very easily squandered by one of her temper. She was both luxurious and generous, devoted to her pleasures, and seemed to have taken Lord Rochester's resolution of avoiding all sorts of self-denial. She had a greater vivacity in conversation than ever I knew in a German of either sex. She loved reading, and had a taste of all polite learning. Her humour was easy and sociable. Her constitution inclined her to gallantry. She was well-bred and amusing in company. She knew both how to please and be pleased, and had experience enough to know it was hard to do either without money. Her unlimited expenses had left her with very little remaining, and she made what haste she could to make advantage of the opinion the English had of her power with the King, by receiving the presents that were made her from all quarters, and which she knew very well must cease when it was known that the King's idleness carried him to her lodgings without either regard for her advice, or affection for her person, which time and very bad paint had left without any of the charms which had once attracted him. His best-beloved mistress remained still at Hanover, which was the beautiful Countess of Platen.

" Perhaps it will be thought a digression in this place to tell the story of his amour with her ; but, as I write only for myself, I shall always think I am at liberty to make what digressions I think fit, proper or improper ; besides that in my opinion can set the King's character in a clearer light. That lady was married to Madame Kielmansegg's brother, the most considerable man in Hanover for birth and fortune ; and her beauty was as far beyond that of any of the other women that appeared. However, the King saw her every day without taking notice of it, and contented himself with his habitual commerce with Mademoiselle Schulenburg.

" In those little Courts there is no distinction of much value but what arises from the favour of the Prince, and Madame Platen saw with great indignation that all her charms were passed over unregarded ; and she took a method to get over

this misfortune which would never have entered into the head of a woman of sense, and yet which met with wonderful success. She asked an audience of his Highness, who granted it without guessing what she meant by it ; and she told him that as nobody could refuse her the first rank in that place, it was very mortifying to see his Highness not show her any mark of favour ; and as no person could be more attached to his person than herself, she begged with tears in her fine eyes that he would alter his behaviour to her. The Elector, very much astonished at this complaint, answered that he did not know any reason he had given her to believe he was wanting in respect for her, and that he thought her not only the greatest lady, but the greatest beauty of the court. 'If that be true, sire,' replied she, sobbing, 'why do you pass all your time with Mademoiselle Schulenburg, while I hardly receive the honour of a visit from you ? ' His Highness promised to mend his manners, and from that time was very assiduous in waiting upon her. This ended in a fondness, which her husband disliked so much that he parted with her, and she had the glory of possessing the heart and person of her master, and to turn the whole stream of courtiers that used to attend Mademoiselle Schulenburg to her side. However, he did not break with his first love, and often went to her apartment to cut paper, which was his chief employment there ; which the Countess of Platen easly permitted him, having often occasion for his absence. She was naturally gallant ; and, after having thus satisfied her ambition, pursued her warmer inclinations.

" Young Craggs came about this time to Hanover, where his father sent him to take a view of that court in his tour of travelling. He was in his first bloom of youth and vigour, and had so strong an appearance of that perfection, that it was called beauty by the generality of women : though in my opinion there was a coarseness in his face and shape that had more the air of a porter than a gentleman ; and, if fortune had not interposed her almighty power, he might by his birth have appeared in that figure ; his father being nothing more

considerable at his first appearance in the world than footman to Lady Mary Mordaunt, the gallant Duchess of Norfolk, who had always half a dozen intrigues to manage. Some servant must always be trusted in affairs of that kind and James Craggs had the good fortune to be chose for that purpose. She found him both faithful and discreet, and he was soon advanced to the dignity of *valet-de-chambre.*

" King James II had an amour with her after he was upon the throne, and respected the Queen enough to endeavour to keep it entirely from her knowledge. James Craggs was the messenger between the King and the Duchess, and did not fail to make the best use of so important a trust. He scraped a great deal of money from the bounty of this royal lover, and was too inconsiderable to be hurt by his ruin ; and did not concern much for that of his mistress, which by lower intrigues happened soon after. This fellow, from the report of all parties, and even from that of his professed enemies, had a very uncommon genius ; a head well turned for calculation, great industry, and was so just an observer of the world, that the meanness of his education never appeared in his conversation.

" The Duke of Marlborough, who was sensible how well he was qualified for affairs that required secrecy, employed him as his procurer both for women and money, and he acquitted himself so well of these trusts as to please his master, and yet raise a considerable fortune, by turning his money in the public funds, the secret of which came often to his knowledge by the Duke's employing him. He had this only son, whom he looked on with the partiality of a parent, and resolved to spare nothing in his education that could add to his figure.

" Young Craggs had great vivacity, a happy memory, and flowing elocution, he was brave and generous, and had an appearance of open-heartedness in his manner that gained him a universal good-will, if not a universal esteem. It is true there appeared a heat and want of judgment in all his words and actions, which did not make him valuable in the eyes of cool judges, but Madame Platen was not of that number. His

youth and fire made him appear very well worthy of his passionate addresses. Two people so well disposed towards each other were very soon in the closest engagement ; and the first proof Madame Platen gave him of her affection was introducing him to the favour of the Elector, who took it on her word that he was a young man of extraordinary merit, and he named him for Cofferer at his first accession to the Crown of England, and I believe it was the only place that he then disposed of from any inclination of his own. This proof of Madame Platen's favour hindered her coming hither.

" Bernstorff was afraid she might meddle in the distribution of places that he was willing to keep in his own hands ; and he represented to the King that the Roman Catholic religion that she professed was an insuperable objection to her appearance at the Court of England, at least so early ; but he gave her private hopes that things might be so arranged as to make her admittance easy when the King was settled in his new dominions. And with this hope she consented without much concern to let him go without her ; not reflecting that weak minds lose all impressions by even short absences. But as her own understanding did not furnish her with very great refinements, she was troubled with none of the fears that would have affected a stronger head, and had too good an opinion of her own beauty to believe anything in England could efface it, while Madame Kielmansegg attached herself to the one thing necessary—getting what money she could by the sale of places, and the credulity of those who thought themselves very polite in securing her favour.

" Lord Halifax was one of this number ; his ambition was unbounded, and he aimed at no less than the Treasurer's staff, and thought himself in a fine road for it by furnishing Madame Kielmansegg both with money and a lover. Mr. Methuen was the man he picked out for that purpose. He was one of the Lords of the Treasury ; he was handsome and well-made ; he had wit enough to be able to affect any part he pleased and a romantic turn in his conversation that could entertain a lady

with as many adventures as Othello,—and it is no ill way of gaining Desdemonas. Women are very apt to take their lovers' characters from their own mouths ; and if you will believe Mr. Methuen's account of himself, neither Artamenes nor Oroondates ever had more valour, honour, constancy, and discretion. Half of these bright qualities were enough to charm Madame Kielmansegg, and they were soon in the strictest familiarity, which continued for different reasons, to the pleasure of both parties, till the arrival of Mademoiselle Schulenburg, which was hastened by the German ministers, who envied the money accumulated by Madame Kielmansegg, which they longed to turn into another channel, which they thought would be more easily drawn into their own hands. They took care to inform Mademoiselle Schulenburg of the fond reception all the Germans met with in England, and gave her a view of the immense fortune that waited her here. This was enough to cure her fears, and she arrived accompanied by a young niece who had already made some noise at Hanover. She had projected the conquest of the Prince of Wales, and had so far succeeded as to obtain his favours for some months, but the Princess, who dreaded a rival to her power, soon put an end to the correspondence, and she was no longer possessed of his good graces when she came hither.

" I have not yet given the character of the Prince. The fire of his temper appeared in every look and gesture ; which, being unhappily under the direction of a small understanding, was every day throwing him upon some indiscretion. He was naturally sincere, and his pride told him that he was placed above constraint ; not reflecting that a high rank carries along with it a necessity if a more decent and regular behaviour than is expected from those who are not set in so conspicuous a light. He was far from being of that opinion, that he looked on all men and women he saw as creatures he might kick or kiss for his diversion ; and whenever he met with any opposition in those designs, he thought his opposers insolent rebels to the will of God, who created them for his use, and judged of the

merit of all people by their submission to his orders, or the relation they had to his power. And in this view, he looked upon the Princess, as the most meritorious of her sex ; and she took care to keep him in that sentiment by all the arts she was mistress of. He had married her by inclination ; his good-natured father had been so complaisant as to let him choose a wife for himself. She was of the house of Anspach, and brought him no great addition either of money or alliance ; but was at that time esteemed a German beauty, and had genius which qualified her for the government of a fool ; and made her despicable in the eyes of men of sense ; I mean a low cunning, which gave her an inclination to cheat all the people she conversed with, and often cheated herself in the first place, by showing her the wrong side of her interest, not having understanding enough to observe that falsehood in conversation, like red on the face, should be used very seldom, and very sparingly, or they destroy that interest and beauty which they are designed to heighten.

" Her first thought on her marriage was to secure to herself the sole and whole direction of her spouse ; and to that purpose she counterfeited the most extravagant fondness for his person ; yet, at the same time, so devoted to his pleasures (which she often told him were the rule of all her thoughts and actions), that whenever he thought proper to find them with other women, she even loved whoever was instrumental to his entertainment, and never resented anything but what appeared to her a want of respect for him ; and in this light she really could not help taking notice that the presents made to her on her wedding were not worthy of his bride, and at least she ought to have had all his mother's jewels. This was enough to make him lose all respect for his indulgent father. He downright abused his ministers, and talked impertinently to his old grandmother the Princess Sophia, which ended in such a coldness towards all his family as left him entirely under the government of his wife.

" The indolent Elector contented himself with showing his

resentment by his silence towards him ; and this was the situation the family first appeared in when they came into England. This behaviour did not, however, hinder schemes being laid by various persons of gratifying their ambition, or making their fortunes, by particular attachments to each of the Royal Family."

CHAPTER VII

AT HERRENHAUSEN AND ST. JAMES (1714-1716)

The Elector George Lewis not delighted at his accession to the British throne—A greater man in Hanover than in London—Lady Mary modifies her first impression of the King—She is in high favour at Court—An amusing incident at St. James's—The early unpopularity of George I in England generally, and especially in the capital—The Hanoverians in the Royal Household—The Duchess of Kendal—The Countess of Darlington—Lady Mary's description of the Hanoverian ladies—The Duchess of Kendal's passion for money—Her influence with the King in political matters—Count de Broglie—The scandal about Lady Darlington refuted—Lady Mary and the Prince of Wales—The King and the Prince of Wales—The poets and wits of the day—Gay's tribute to Lady Mary—Pope's verses on her—" Court Poems."

It is beyond question that the accession to the British throne gave no thrill of pleasure to the King. He was fifty-four years of age, and had no desire to change his state. It was necessary for him, as the present writer has said elsewhere, now to go from a country where he was absolute, to another where, so far from being supreme, when King and people differed on a matter of vital importance, the monarch had to give way—the price of resistance having been fixed, at worst at death, at best exile or civil war. He had to go from a country where he was the wealthiest and most important personage to another where he would be merely regarded as a minor German princeling set up as a figurehead, and where many of the gentry were wealthier than he. This point was appreciated by Lady Mary when she went to Hanover in November, 1716, for she wrote from there to the Countess of Bristol : " I have now made the tour of Germany, and cannot help observing difference

between travelling here and in England. One sees none of those fine seats of noblemen that are so common among us, nor anything like a country gentleman's house, though they have many situations perfectly fine. But the whole people are divided into absolute sovereignties, where all the riches and magnificence are at Court, or communities of merchants, such as Nuremberg and Frankfort, where they live always in town for the convenience of trade."

Worse than all George must set forth by no means sure of his reception, and with no love, nor even liking, for the people over whom he was called to reign. That he did go at all is greatly to his credit, for he was doubtful if he would be allowed to remain, and he never revisited Hanover without some suspicion that he might not be able to return to England. He would have been a much happier man if he could have remained at his beloved Herrenhausen. He never felt he owed Britain anything, and indeed he did not: the throne had been settled on his mother, not for love of her, but simply because she was the only alternative to the succession of the dreaded Roman Catholic heirs. So George came as a visitor, rather submitting to be King of England, than anxious for the honour, prepared to be forced by circumstances to return, little dreaming that two hundred years later his descendants would be firmly seated upon his throne.

It may be mentioned that Lady Mary, as she became better acquainted with the King, grew to like him. In the letter from Hanover just quoted, she says: "His Majesty dines and sups constantly in public. The Court is very numerous, and his affability and goodness make it one of the most agreeable places in the world to me." The King was indeed at his best when in residence at Herrenhausen. Lord Peterborough said that George was so happy there that he believed he had forgot *the accident that occurred to him and his family on the* 1*st of August*, 1714.

It may be that, the King having taken a great fancy to Lady Mary, modified that lady's earlier impression. When she and

her husband went to Hanover, the King, as she mentioned in one of her letters to Lady Bristol, "has had the goodness to appoint us a lodging in one part of the Palace, without which we should be very ill accommodated; for the vast number of English crowds the town so much, it is very good luck to be able to get one sorry room in a miserable tavern. I dined to-day with the Portuguese ambassador, who thinks himself very happy to have two wretched parlours in an inn."

Lady Mary was, indeed, in high favour at the Courts of Hanover and St. James's. "Mr. Wortley and his lady are here," the British Minister at Hanover, John Clavering, wrote in December, 1716, to Lady Cowper. "They were so very impatient to see his Majesty that they travelled night and day from Vienna here. Her Ladyship is mighty gay and airy, and occasions a great deal of discourse. Since her arrival the King has took but little notice of any other lady, not even of Madame Kielmansegg, which the ladies of Hanover don't relish very much; for my part, I can't help rejoicing to see his Majesty prefer us to the Germans."

It was evidently before that the following incident occurred. Lady Mary often went to St. James's, but, as it was very dull there, was often glad to go instead to some less august and more amusing assembly. One evening Lady Mary particularly desired to leave early, and induced the Duchess of Kendal to persuade the King to dismiss her. The King reluctantly acquiesced, though, when Lady Mary made her bow, he declared it was an act of perfidy to run away, but, in spite of that and other complimentary remarks, she at last contrived to make her escape.

At the foot of the staircase she met Mr. Secretary Craggs, who, seeing her leave so early, enquired if the King had retired, but she reassured him on that point, and dwelt complacently on the King's reluctance to let her go. Craggs made no remark, but took her in his arms, ran upstairs, and deposited her in the ante-chamber, whereupon the pages at once threw open the doors leading to the King's apartment.

"*Ah! la re-voilà,*" cried his Majesty and the Duchess of Kendal, and expressed their pleasure that she had changed her mind, but Lady Mary was so flustered that, instead of maintaining a discreet silence she burst out, "Oh, Lord, Sir, I have been so frightened!" and related her adventure.

She had scarcely finished relating her adventure, when the door was thrown open, and Mr. Secretary Craggs was announced. He entered calmly, and made his bow as if nothing had happened, but the King strode up to him, and said angrily: "*Mais, comment, donc, Monsieur Craggs, est ce que c'est l'usage de ce pays de porter des belles dames comme un sac de froment?*" ("Is it the custom of this country to carry about fair ladies as if they were a sack of wheat?") The culprit was dumbfounded by the unexpected attack, and glanced reproachfully at Lady Mary for having betrayed him, but, soon finding his wits, parried with, "There is nothing I would not do for your Majesty's satisfaction."

One of the reasons for the early unpopularity of George I was that he brought with him a large suite from Hanover.

The household that accompanied him numbered sixty-three. There was Baron von Kielmansegg, who was Master of the Horse; Count von Platen, son of the late Prime Minister of Hanover; and Baron von Hardenburg, Marshal of the Court. With them came the Lutheran clergyman, Braun; a group of physicians, surgeons, and apothecaries; five body-servants, including the Turks, Mahomet and Mustapha; four pages, two trumpeters, a carver, twelve footmen, eighteen cooks, three cellarmen, two housemaids, and one washerwoman. It may be mentioned that in 1696 there were only two washerwomen for the three hundred and seven persons, exclusive of royalty, that at this date made up the Court of Hanover.

The political staff that came included twenty-three persons. Baron von Bothmer was already in England. Now arrived Baron von Bernstorff, Prime Minister of Hanover; Baron von Schlitz-Goertz, Hanoverian Finance Minister; Baron von Hattorf, Hanoverian Minister of War; and John Robethon.

To these men, who advised the King in his capacity of Elector of Hanover, there would have been no objection had they confined their energies to administering that country. This, unfortunately, was not the case. Some of them, at least, notably Bernstorff and Robethon, meddled in English politics, and most of them desired high office, lucrative appointments, peerages, and other grants. It is certain that they must have known that they were barred from such delights by an Act of 1700 which carefully guarded against foreigners acquiring any share in the government of this country. Nothing, in fact, could be more definite than clause three of the " Act for the further limitation of the Crown " : " No person born out of the Kingdoms of England, Scotland, or Ireland, or the dominions thereunto belonging (although he be naturalised or made a denizen, except such as are born of English parents)," so runs clause three of the above-mentioned Act, " shall be capable of the Privy Council, or a Member of either House of Parliament, or to enjoy any office or place of trust, either civil or military, or to have any grant of lands, tenements, or hereditaments from the Crown to himself or to any other or others in trust for him." Still, Acts of Parliament have been repealed, and the invaders may well have hoped that, with the King's support, their influence might increase until they were strong enough to have the clause revoked.

As a matter of fact, nothing of the kind happened, and no Hanoverian statesman or court officer was appointed to any place of profit under the Crown or rewarded for his services in the Electorate by the grant of a British peerage. It may be noted that the Hanoverian officials, fond as all Germans were and are of wordy distinctions, styled themselves " Koenigliche-Grossbritannische - Kurfuerstlich - Braunschweig - Lueneburgische" (Royal-British-Electoral-Brunswick-Luenburg) councillors or magistrates.

The Hanoverians who were on the political side or held posts in the Household might, by the exercise of a little tact, have lived down an unpopularity that was the result of circumstances

rather than arising from any personal animosity. That they did not do so may be ascribed partly, anyhow, to their own fault.

On the other hand, nothing probably would have overcome the prejudice against the ladies who followed George to this country. These were the Countess Ehrengard Melusina von der Schulenburg, who, in 1716, was created Duchess of Munster in the Irish peerage, and three years after Duchess of Kendal, by which latter title she is more generally known, and the Baroness von Kielmansegg (*née* Platen), who was presently elevated to the dignity of Countess of Darlington. It was generally assured that these ladies were the King's mistresses, and they were accordingly disliked not only at Court but also by the mob. One of them when driving in London was assailed by terms of abuse—as she understood scarcely any English, she could only go by the tone of the voices—and putting her head out of the coach said: "Good people, why abuse us? We come for all your goods." "Yes, damn you," cried someone, "and for our chattels, too." The man in the crowd only voiced the general opinion, and, it must be said, the general opinion was not far removed from the truth.

Of course, the Jacobites made the most of this, and, as Horace Walpole has related, "the seraglio was food for all the venom of the Jacobites, and, indeed, nothing could be grosser that was vomited out in lampoons, libels, and every channel of abuse against the Sovereign and the new Court and chanted even in their hearing in the public streets."

It is mentioned in *Walpoliana* that "this couple of rabbits, the favourites, as they were called, occasioned much jocularity on their first importation." Some of the jocularity was aroused by their appearance. The style of beauty, or what passed for beauty, in each country was markedly different. Hear Lady Mary Wortley Montagu writing from Hanover in December, 1716: "I have now got into the regions of beauty, she told Lady Rich. "All the women have literally rosy cheeks, snowy foreheads and bosoms, jet eye-brows, and scarlet lips, to which they generally add coal-black hair. These

perfections never leave them till the hour of their death, and have a very fine effect by candle-light, but I could wish they were handsome with a little more variety. They resemble one another as much as Mrs. Salmon's Court of Great Britain, and are in much danger of melting away by too near approaching the fire which they for that reason carefully avoid, though it is now such excessively cold weather, that I believe they suffer extremely by that piece of self-denial."

The Duchess of Kendal at the time of the accession of George I was forty-seven years of age. The King's mother, the Electress Sophia, had commented on her to Mrs. Howard : " Look at that mawkin, and think of her being my son's passion." If a family portrait, now in the possession of Count Werner Schulenburg, may be trusted, she was what is called " a fine figure of a woman " ; she had blue eyes and fair hair. She was so tall that she was nicknamed in England " the May-pole." She was certainly determined to make the most of her opportunities, and the more eager because at the beginning of the reign she was very doubtful whether George I would not have hurriedly to retire to Hanover for good and all. So doubtful of the likelihood of the duration of the Hanoverian line in this country was she that at first she declined to accompany the Elector, and she only changed her mind when she found the Baroness von Kielmansegg had decided to go to England. She was in high favour with George, and took every advantage of her influence. She left an immense fortune, which was acquired in ways into which an eulogistic biographer of the lady would not enquire. Certainly, she received for her good offices large sums of money from the promoters of the South Sea Act, she accepted bribes to secure peerages, and, it is said on the authority of Sir Robert Walpole, that Bolingbroke presented her with £11,000 to endeavour to secure his restoration to the royal favour. It may be remarked, *en passant*, that Spence records that Lady Mary Wortley Montagu said to him : " I would never be acquainted with Lord Bolingbroke, because I always looked upon him as a vile man."

The Duchess of Kendal was not content with indulging her passion for money ; she, in matters of politics, acted as the hidden hand behind the throne—any services that she rendered were, it is certain, adequately remunerated. Her ascendancy over the King was unquestionable, and Walpole was compelled to admit that she " was in effect as much Queen of England as ever any was, that he did everything by her." She not only used her power in connection with home affairs, but also in matters of foreign policy, and the Count de Broglie, French Minister of the Court of St. James, was urgent in his endeavours to secure her support.

" As the Duchess of Kendal seemed to express a wish to see me often, I have been very attentive to her, being convinced that it is highly essential to the advantage of your Majesty's service to be on good terms with her, for she is closely united with the three ministers who now govern," the Count wrote to Louis XV on July 6, 1724, and four days later returned to the subject : " The more I consider state affairs, the more I am convinced that the Government is entirely in the hands of Mr. Walpole, Lord Townshend, and the Duchess of Newcastle, who are on the best terms with the Duchess of Kendal. The King visits her every afternoon from five till eight, and it is there that she endeavours to penetrate the sentiments of his Britannic majesty for the purpose of consulting the three ministers, and pursuing the measures which may be thought necessary for accomplishing their designs. She sent me word that she was desirous of my friendship, and that I should place confidence in her. I assured her that I would do everything in my power to merit her esteem and friendship. I am convinced that she may be advantageously employed in promoting your Majesty's service, and that it will be necessary to employ her, though I will not trust her further than is absolutely necessary." To these letters Louis replied on July 18 : " There is no doubt that the Duchess of Kendal, having a great ascendancy over the King of Great Britain, and maintaining strict union with his ministers, must materially influence their principal resolutions. You will

neglect nothing to acquire a share of her confidence, from a conviction that nothing can be more conducive to my interests. There is, however, a manner of giving additional value to the marks of confidence you bestow on her in private, by avoiding in public all appearances which might seem too pointed, by which means you will avoid falling into the inconvenience of being suspected by those who are not friendly to the Duchess, at the same time that a kind of mysteriousness in public on the subject of your confidence, will give rise to a firm belief of your having formed a friendship mutually sincere."

The case of Lady Darlington was different. It was assured generally that she, too, was a mistress of the King, a view that Lady Mary Wortley Montagu accepted, and one which was endorsed by the historians and biographers for more than a century. The first English writer to discover the truth was Carlyle, who in his *Life of Frederick the Great* said : "Miss Kielmansegg, Countess of Darlington, was, and is, believed by the gossiping English to have been a second simultaneous Mistress of His Majesty's, but seems after all to have been his Half-Sister and nothing more." She was, in fact, a daughter of the Countess of Platen (*née* Clara Elizabeth von Meysenbach), not, indeed, by that lady's husband, but by Ernest Augustus, Duke (afterwards Elector) of Hanover, the father of George I. Only Lady Cowper seems to have known this, and to have accepted it as a fact. Yet there was no secrecy concerning the paternity of the Countess, and it was, of course, well-known in the German Courts. Further, it was overlooked that in the patent of nobility in 1721 there is a reference to the royal blood of the recipient of the title, and actually the patent, in addition to the Great Seal, had a miniature of the King and the arms of the houses of Platen, Kielmansegg, and Great Britain (Brunswick-Lueneburg) with the bar-sinister.*

* Refutation of the scandal is to be found in a work published in Hanover in 1902 : "*Briefe des Hertzogs Ernst August zu Braunschweig-Lüneburg an Johann Franz Diedrich von Wendt aus dem Jahren* 1705 *bis* 1726," edited by Erich Graf Kielmansegg.

All this at this time must have been very distressing to Lady Darlington, for she was very careful of her reputation, as the following amusing incident, given in Lady Cowper's Diary (February 4, 1716) indicates: "Madame Kielmansegg had been told that the Prince, afterwards George II, had said that she intrigued with all the men at Hanover. She came to complain of this to the Princess, who replied, she did not believe the Prince had said so, it not being his custom to speak in that manner. Madame Kielmansegg cried and said it had made her despised, and that many of her acquaintance had left her upon that story, but that her husband had taken all the care she could to vindicate her reputation, and thereupon she drew forth a certificate under her husband's hand, in which he certified, in all the due forms, that she had always been a faithful wife to him, and that he had never had any cause to suspect her honesty. The Princess smiled, and said she did not doubt it at all, and that all the trouble was very unnecessary, and that it was a very bad reputation that wanted such a support."

In appearance, Lady Darlington was a contrast to the Duchess of Kendal. She was in her youth a good-looking woman, but as the years passed she became immensely corpulent, and Horace Walpole, who saw her at his mother's when he was a child, thus described her: "Two fierce black eyes, large and rolling between two lofty arched eye-brows, two acres of cheeks spread with crimson, an ocean of neck that overflowed, and was not distinguished from the lower part of her body, and no part restrained by stays." He christened her "Elephant and Castle."

For a while, Lady Mary was popular also with the Prince of Wales, who was attracted by her looks and her vivacity. It is recorded that on one occasion when Lady Mary appeared in a gown more than usually becoming the Prince called his wife from the card table to admire her. The Princess came, looked, and then said calmly, "Lady Mary always dresses so well," and went on with her game.

It was impossible, however, even for the most tactful person

in the world to be on good terms with the King and the Prince of Wales. It is said of George I that he was of an affectionate disposition and that throughout his life he hated only three people in the world : his mother, who was dead, his wife, who was imprisoned at Ahlden, and his son. It has been said that the trouble began when in his early youth the Prince expressed sympathy with his mother ; it may be that it started from the fact that the Prince was the son of a woman who had sullied the honour of the Royal House. It is, however, unnecessary to look for reasons ; to hate the heir-apparent was a tradition with the Georges.

Matters did not improve after the accession of George I to the British throne. He disliked his daughter-in-law, Caroline, daughter of John Frederick, Margrave of Brandenburg-Anspach, and spoke of her as "*Cette diablesse Madame la Princesse.*" The opposition was not slow to take advantage of the rift, and planted itself on the side of his Royal Highness. It proposed, on the Civil List vote, a separate revenue of £100,000 for the Prince—which infuriated the King, as it was intended to do.

In 1716 George was anxious to visit his beloved Hanover, but he was torn between the desire to do so and the dislike to leave his son in England as Regent during his absence. Indeed, he almost decided not to go, unless he could join others with the Prince in the administration and limit his authority by the most rigorous restriction. To this, however, the Government could not consent, and Townshend stated that "on a careful persual of precedents, finding no instance of persons being joined in commission with the Prince of Wales, and few, if any, restrictions, they were of opinion that the constant tenour of ancient practice could not conveniently be receded from."

Lady Mary, like the rest of the world, found the Court dull, and she much preferred to spend her time in the more congenial society of men of letters. Addison, she knew, and Steele, and Arbuthnot, and Jervas, and Gay, who presently paid her a

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

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pretty compliment in *Mr. Pope's Welcome from Greece*, wherein he inserted tributes to the ladies of the Court :

" What lady's that to whom he gently bends ?
Who knows her not ? Ah, those are Wortley's eyes.
How art thou honour'd, number'd with her friends ;
For she distinguishes the good and wise."

Pope, too, wrote of her with appreciation :

TO LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU

I

In beauty or wit,
No mortal as yet
To question your empire has dared.
But men of discerning
Have thought that in learning,
To yield to a lady was hard.

II

Impertinent schools,
With musty dull rules,
Have reading to females denied ;
So Papists refuse
The Bible to use
Lest flocks should be wise as their guides.

III

'Twas woman at first
(Indeed she was curst)
In knowledge that tasted delight,
And sages agree
The laws should decree
To the first possessor the right.

IV

Then bravely, fair dame,
Resume the old claim,
Which to your whole sex does belong ;
And let men receive
From a second bright Eve
The knowledge of right and of wrong.

V

But if the first Eve
Hard doom did receive,
When only one apple had she,
What a punishment new
Shall be found out for you,
Who tasting, have robb'd the whole tree !

The acquaintance with Pope began shortly after Lady Mary came to town in the autumn of 1714. It soon developed into friendship. " Lady Mary Wortley," Jervas wrote to the poet, probably in 1715 or early in the following year, " ordered me by express this morning, *cedente Gayo et ridente Fortescuvio*, to send you a letter, or some other proper notice, to come to her on Thursday about five, which I suppose she meant in the evening."

There appeared in March, 1716, a volume bearing the title *Court Poems*, the authorship being attributed to " A Lady of Quality," who, it soon became known, was Lady Mary. The book was issued by Roberts, who had received the three sets of verses contained in it from the notorious piratical publisher, Edmund Curll. How the manuscript " fell " into the hands of Curll it is not easy to imagine. Curll's account is that they were found in a pocket-book taken up in Westminster Hall on the last day of the trial of the Jacobite Lord Winton. Anyhow, however it came about, the volume was published in 1716, when it was found to contain " The Basset Table," " The Drawing Room," and " The Toilet."

Curll was an excellent publicity agent for his wares. He wrote, or caused to be written, a most intriguing " advertisement " about the authorship of the poems :

" Upon reading them over at St. James' Coffee House, they were attributed by the general voice to be the productions of a lady of quality. When I produced them at Button's, the poetical jury there brought in a different verdict ; and the foreman strenuously insisted upon it that Mr. Gay was the man. Not content with these two decisions, I was resolved to call in an umpire, and accordingly chose a gentleman of distinguished merit, who lives not far from Chelsea. I sent him the papers, which he returned next day, with this answer : ' Sir, depend upon it these lines could come from no other hand than the judicious translator of Homer." Thus, having impartially given the sentiments of the Town, I hope I may deserve thanks for the pains I have taken in endeavouring

to find out the author of these valuable performances, and everybody is at liberty to bestow the laurel as they please."

Pope was furious, and there is a story that he invited Curll to drink wine with him at a coffee-house, and put in his glass some poison that acted as an emetic. What is certain is that the poet wrote a pamphlet with the title, "A full and true Account of a horrid and barbarous Revenge by Poison on the body of Edmund Curll."

The three pieces in *Court Poems* were claimed by Lady Mary as her own, but this claim was disputed. Pope declared himself the author of "The Basset Table," and it was printed among his works, and he asserted that "'The Toilet' is almost wholly Gay's, there being "only five or six lines in it by that lady." "The Toilet" is included in his collected edition of Gay's poems.

The whole matter is best explained by that sound student of the eighteenth century, "George Paston," who suggests that the truth seems to be that the verses were handed round in manuscript to be read and corrected by the writer's literary friends, and therefore they owe something to the different hands. "George Paston" goes on to say: "Lady Mary was not unaware of the danger of this proceeding, for Richardson the painter relates that on one occasion she showed Pope a copy of her verses in which she intended to make some trifling alterations, but refused his help, saying, 'No, Pope, no touching, for then whatever is good for anything will pass for yours, and the rest for mine."

CHAPTER VIII

THE EMBASSY TO THE PORTE—I (1716)

Montagu loses his place at the Treasury—His antagonism against Walpole—Lady Mary, "Dolly" Walpole, and Molly Skerritt —The Earl and Countess of Mar leave England—Montagu appointed Ambassador to the Porte—Leaves England for Constantinople, accompanied by his wife—Letters during the Embassy to Constantinople—Rotterdam—Vienna—Lady Mary at Court—Her gown—Her interest in clothes—Viennese society—Gallantry—Lady Mary's experience—Count Tarrocco—Precedence at Vienna—A nunnery—The Montagus visit the German Courts —A dangerous drive—Prince Frederick (afterwards Prince of Wales)—Herrenhausen.

EDWARD WORTLEY MONTAGU did not long hold office. Lord Halifax, First Lord of the Treasury in the Townshend Administration, died in May, 1715, when his place was taken by Lord Carlisle, who, however, held it only until the following October. Carlisle was succeeded by Sir Robert Walpole, promoted from the less important but far more lucrative post of Paymaster-General. In the new Commission of the Treasury Montagu's name did not appear. Why Montagu was removed has not transpired; it may, indeed, be that he resigned, for he had a strong dislike for the new Minister. There may also have been some family sentiment in the matter, for while Lady Mary was an intimate friend of Walpole's harum-scarum sister, "Dolly," who was now Lady Townshend, Lady Walpole was very decidedly her enemy. Lady Mary presently had her tit-for-tat with Lady Walpole by "taking up" Walpole's mistress, Molly Skerritt.

It may be here mentioned that Lady Mar was at this time

living with her husband at Paris, at St. Germain, and that she remained abroad for the rest of her life. She had left England owing to the conduct of Lord Mar in taking an active part in the rebellion of '15. He had set up the Pretender's standard at Braemar, had suffered defeat at Sheriffmuir, and had been so fortunate as to escape with his master to Gravelines. In gratitude for his services, the Pretender created Lord Mar a Duke. Mar lived until 1732, dying at the age of fifty-seven, and he spent the years in losing the confidence of the Jacobites and endeavouring to ingratiate himself with the Hanoverian Kings of England—in which latter quest he was markedly unsuccessful. His Scotch estates were confiscated, and his title attained—the attainder of the earldom was not reversed until 1824.

Montagu, having tasted the sweets of office, even so minor a place as that of a Lord of the Treasury, was not content to enjoy such pleasures as a private life could afford. He desired to be somebody. Probably he worried the Government of the day, possibly he pointed out to the leaders of the Whig Party that he was possessed of parts that should not, in justice to his country, be ignored. He may even have approached the Throne. It is not inconceivable that he made himself a nuisance to all concerned.

Anyhow, it was ultimately decided that something must be done with him. But what? Austria and Turkey were at war in 1716; what better than to send Montagu as Ambassador to the Porte, with a mission to endeavour to reconcile the protagonists? He was appointed to this post on June 5.

It was while accompanying her husband on this mission that Lady Mary wrote her famous "Letters during the Embassy to Constantinople," which constitute a very important document on the state of Europe at the time. It is by no means certain, however, that, in the first instance, these reflections were all cast in letter-form; it is much more likely that some were written in a diary. The letters appear as addressed to the Countess of Bristol, to the Princess of Wales, to Mrs. Thistlethwayte, to Lady Rich, to Alexander Pope, to the Abbé Conti, to Miss

Sarah Chiswell, to Mrs. Hewet, to Lady Mary's sister, the Countess of Mar, and others.

At the beginning of August, 1716, Montagu, with his wife and son, and, it is to be presumed, his suite, left England, and, after a very bad crossing, landed at Rotterdam. From that city, the cleanliness of which surprised and delighted Lady Mary—" you may see the Dutch maids washing the pavement of the street with more application than ours do our bed-chambers "—the party proceeded by way of the Hague, Nimeguen, Cologne, Frankfort-on-the-Main, Wurzberg, and Ratisbon to Vienna, where they arrived during the first week in September.

Lady Mary was all impatient to go to Court, for, as she put it, " I am not without a great impatience to see a beauty that has been the admiration of so many nations," but she was forced to stay for a gown, without which there was no waiting on the Empress. Presently the gown was ready, and Lady Mary was presented.

" I was squeezed up in a gown " (she wrote to her sister, Lady Mar), " and adorned with a gorget and the other implements thereunto belonging : a dress very inconvenient, but which certainly shews the neck and shape to great advantage. I cannot forbear in this place giving you some description of the fashions here which are more monstrous and contrary to all common sense and reason, than 'tis possible for you to imagine. They build certain fabrics of gauze on their heads about a yard high, consisting of three or four stories fortified with numberless yards of heavy ribbon. The foundation of this structure is a thing they call a *Bourle* which is exactly of the same shape and kind, but about four times as big, as those rolls our prudent milk-maids make use of to fix their pails upon. This machine they cover with their own hair, which they mix with a great deal of false, it being a particular beauty to have their heads too large to go into a moderate tub. Their hair is prodigiously powdered, to conceal the mixture, and set out with three or four rows of bodkins (wonderfully

large, that stick [out] two or three inches from their hair), made of diamonds, pearls, red, green, and yellow stones, that it certainly requires as much art and experience to carry the load upright, as to dance upon May-day with the garland. Their whalebone petticoats outdo ours by several yards circumference, and cover some acres of ground.

"You may easily suppose how much this extraordinary dress sets off and improves the natural ugliness with which God Almighty has been pleased to endow them all generally. Even the lovely Empress herself is obliged to comply, in some degree, with these absurd fashions, which they would not quit for all the world."

The above passage is the more interesting because it has so often been asserted that Lady Mary took no interest in dress. As a matter of fact, however, there are several indications in her letters that she thought a good deal about clothes.

"My little commission is hardly worth speaking of; if you have not already laid out that small sum in St. Cloud ware, I had rather have it in plain lutestring of any colour," she wrote in June, 1721, to her sister, Lady Mar, at Paris.

"I would have no black silk, having bought here," she said on another occasion; and again, "My paper is done, and I will only put you in mind of my lutestring, which I beg you will send me plain, of what colour you please." "Dear Sister, adieu," she wrote in 1723. "I have been very free in this letter, because I think I am sure of its going safe. I wish my nightgown may do the same: I only choose that as most convenient to you; but if it was equally so, I had rather the money was laid out in plain lutestring, if you could send me eight yards at a time of different colours, designing it for linings; but if this scheme is impracticable, send me a nightgown *à la mode*."

Apparently Lady Mar was careless or forgetful of the commission, for a little later Lady Mary was writing pathetically: "I wish you would think of my lutestring, for I am in terrible want of linings."

The account of the Austrian Court of the day, as given by Lady Mary, is invaluable, for there is no other available written by an English person accustomed to another Court.

Lady Mary's descriptions of Viennese society are also delightful, and if she wrote of the royal circle with respect, she bubbled over with merriment when writing of folk less highly placed. A letter of hers to Lady Rich is too delicious to be omitted.

" I have compassion for the mortifications that you tell me befall our little friend, and I pity her much more, since I know that they are only owing to the barbarous customs of our country. Upon my word, if she was here, she would have no other fault but being something too young for the fashion, and she has nothing to do but to transplant hither about seven years hence, to be again a young and blooming beauty. I can assure you that wrinkles, or a small stoop in the shoulders, nay, even grey hair itself, is no objection to the making new conquests. I know you cannot easily figure to yourself a young fellow of five-and-twenty ogling my Lady Suffolk with passion, or pressing to lead the Countess of Oxford from an opera. But such are the sights I see every day, and I don't perceive any body surprised at them but myself. A woman, till five-and-thirty, is only looked upon as a raw girl, and can possibly make no noise in the world till about forty. I don't know what your ladyship may think of this matter ; but 'tis a considerable comfort to me, to know there is upon earth such a paradise for old women ; and I am content to be insignificant at present, in the design of returning when I am fit to appear nowhere else. I cannot help lamenting upon this occasion, the pitiful case of too many good English ladies, long since retired to prudery and ratafia, whom if their stars had luckily conducted hither, would still shine in the first rank of beauties ; and then that perplexing word reputation has quite another meaning here than what you give it at London ; and getting a lover is so far from losing, that 'tis properly getting reputation ; ladies being much more

respected in regard to the rank of their lovers, than that of their husbands.

" But what you'll think very odd, the two sects that divide our whole nation of petticoats, are utterly unknown. Here are neither coquettes nor prudes. No woman dares appear coquette enough to encourage two lovers at a time. And I have not seen any such prudes as to pretend fidelity to their husbands, who are certainly the best-natured set of people in the world, and they look upon their wives' gallants as favourably as men do upon their deputies, that take the troublesome part of their business off of their hands ; though they have not the less to do ; for they are generally deputies in another place themselves ; in one word, 'tis the established custom for every lady to have two husbands, one that bears the name, and another that performs the duties. And these engagements are so well known, that it would be a downright affront, and publicly resented, if you invited a woman of quality to dinner, without at the same time inviting her two attendants of lover and husband, between whom she always sits in state with great gravity. These sub-marriages generally last twenty years together, and the lady often commands the poor lover's estate even to the utter ruin of his family ; though they are as seldom begun by any passion as other matches. But a man makes but an ill figure who is not in some commerce of this nature ; and a woman looks out for a lover as soon as she's married, as part of her equipage, without which she could not be genteel ; and the first article of the treaty is establishing the pension, which remains to the lady though the gallant should prove inconstant ; and this chargeable point of honour I look upon as the real foundation of so many wonderful instances of constancy. I really know several women of the first quality, whose pensions are as well known as their annual rents, and yet nobody esteems them the less ; on the contrary, their discretion would be called in question, if they should be suspected to be mistresses for nothing ; and a great part of their emulation consists in trying who shall get most ; and having no intrigue

at all is so far a disgrace that, I'll assure you, a lady, who is very much my friend here, told me but yesterday, how much I was obliged to her for justifying my conduct in a conversation on my subject, where it was publicly asserted that I could not possibly have common sense, that I had been about town above a fortnight, and had made no steps towards commencing an amour. My friend pleaded for me that my stay was uncertain ; and she believed that was the cause of my seeming stupidity and this was all she could find to say in my justification."

But Lady Mary, though only twenty-seven, and therefore, according to her own account, much too youthful for the gallants of Vienna, yet had an experience :

" But one of the pleasantest adventures I ever met in my life was last night, and which will give you a just idea after what a delicate manner the *belles passions* are managed in this country. I was at the assembly of the Countess of——, and the young Count of —— led me down stairs, and he asked me how long I intended to stay here ? I made answer that my stay depended on the emperor, and it was not in my power to determine it. Well, madam, (said he), whether your time here is to be long or short, I think you ought to pass it agreeably, and to that end you must engage in a little affair of the heart.—My heart (answered I gravely enough) does not engage very easily, and I have no design of parting with it. I see, madam, (said he sighing,) by the ill nature of that answer, that I am not to hope for it, which is a great mortification to me that am charmed with you. But, however, I am still devoted to your service ; and since I am not worthy of entertaining you myself, do me the honour of letting me know whom you like best among us, and I'll engage to manage the affair entirely to your satisfaction.—You may judge in what manner I should have received this compliment in my own country, but I was well enough acquainted with the way of this, to know that he really intended me an obligation, and thanked him with a grave

courtesy for his zeal to serve me, and only assured him that I had no occasion to make use of it.

"Thus you see, my dear, gallantry and good-breeding are as different, in different climates, as morality and religion. Who have the rightest notions of both, we shall never know till the day of judgment, for which great day of *éclaircissement*, I own there is very little impatience in your, &c."

Love-making was indeed one of the principal pastimes at Vienna. There was Count Tarrocco (who was in attendance on the Prince of Portugal), and, as she told Lady Mar, "just such a Roman Catholic as you." "He succeeds greatly with the devout beauties here," she went on to say; "his first overtures in gallantry are disguised under the luscious strains of spiritual love, that were sung formerly by the sublimely voluptuous Fenelon and the tender Madam Guion, who turned the spirit of carnal love to divine objects; thus the Count begins with the spirit and ends generally with the flesh, when he makes his addresses to holy virgins." Presently, she teased her sister about this same young man. "Count Tarrocco is just come in," she wrote. "He is the only person I have excepted in my general order to receive no company—I think I see you smile—but I am not so far gone as to stand in need of absolution; though as my heart is deceitful, and the Count very agreeable, you may think that even though I should not want an absolution, I would nevertheless be glad to have an indulgence.—No such thing. However, as I am a heretic, and you no confessor, I shall make no more declarations on this head.—The design of the Count's visit is a ball;—more pleasure—I shall be surfeited."

The "phlegm of the country" surprised Lady Mary, who declared that it was not from Austria that one could write with vivacity—and by her letters at once disproved her statement. According to her, amours and quarrels were carried on calmly and almost good-temperedly. Strong feelings only came into play when points of ceremony were concerned. A man not

only scorned to marry a woman of family less illustrious than his own, but even to make love to her—" the pedigree is much more considered by them than either the complexion or features of their mistresses. Happy are the shes that can number among their ancestors Counts of the Empire ; they have neither occasion for beauty, money, or good conduct to get them husbands." How far this passion for rank and precedence went is indicated by an amusing incident related by Lady Mary.

" 'Tis not long since two coaches, meeting in a narrow street at night, the ladies in them not being able to adjust the ceremonial of which should go back, sat there with equal gallantry till two in the morning, and were both so fully determined to die upon the spot, rather than yield in a point of that importance, that the street would never have been cleared till their deaths, if the emperor had not sent his guards to part them ; and even then they refused to stir, till the expedient was found out of taking them both out in chairs exactly at the same moment ; after which it was with some difficulty the *pas* was decided between the two coachmen, no less tenacious of their rank than the ladies."

Lady Mary herself was, of course, unaffected, because, as the wife of an ambassador, she, by their own customs, had the *pas* before all other ladies—to the great envy of the town.

Lady Mary, who had had enough of solitude during her long residence in Yorkshire, now in Vienna was determined to enjoy herself and flung herself into all the social gaieties. She went everywhere and met everyone. She dined at the villa of Count Schönbrunn, the Vice-Chancellor ; she attended all the assemblies of Madame Rabutin and the other leaders of society, and all the " gala days " ; she danced ; she went to the theatre, and, then, as a contrast, to a nunnery, which left her unhappy, as, indeed, she put on record :

" I was surprised to find here the only beautiful young

woman I have seen at Vienna, and not only beautiful, but genteel, witty, and agreeable, of a great family, and who had been the admiration of the town. I could not forbear shewing my surprise at seeing a nun like her. She made me a thousand obliging compliments, and desired me to come often. It will be an infinite pleasure to me, (said she, sighing,) to see you ; but I avoid, with the greatest care, seeing any of my former acquaintance, and whenever they come to our convent, I lock myself in my cell. I observed tears come into her eyes, which touched me extremely, and I began to talk to her in that strain of tender pity she inspired me with ; but she would not own to me that she is not perfectly happy. I have since endeavoured to learn the real cause of her retirement, without being able to get any other account, but that every body was surprised at it, and nobody guessed the reason.

" I have been several times to see her ; but it gives me too much melancholy to see so agreeable a young creature buried alive, and I am not surprised that nuns have so often inspired violent passions ; the pity one naturally feels for them, when they seem worthy of another destiny, making an easy way for yet more tender sentiments ; and I never in my life had so little charity for the Roman-catholic religion as since I see the misery it occasions ; so many poor unhappy women ! and the gross superstition of the common people, who are, some or other of them, day and night offering bits of candle to the wooden figures that are set up almost in every street. The processions I see very often, are a pageantry as offensive, and apparently contradictory to all common sense, as the pagods of China. God knows whether it be the womanly spirit of contradiction that works in me ; but there never before was so much zeal against popery in the heart of,

" Dear madam, &c."

In November the Montagus interrupted their stay at Vienna to visit some of the German Courts. They went to Prague, where the attire of the ladies amused Lady Mary. " I have been

visited by some of the most considerable ladies, whose relations I know at Vienna," she wrote to Lady Mar. " They are dressed after the fashions there, as people at Exeter imitate those of London ; that is, the imitation is more excessive than the original ; 'tis not easy to describe what extraordinary figures they make. The person is so much lost between head-dress and petticoat, they have as much occasion to write upon their backs ' This is a woman,' for the information of travellers, as ever sign-post painter had to write, ' This is a bear.' " From Prague to Dresden, travelling thither by a most alarming route :

" You may imagine how heartily I was tired with twenty-four hours' post-travelling [to Dresden], without sleep or refreshment (for I can never sleep in a coach, however fatigued). We passed by moonshine the frightful precipices that divide Bohemia from Saxony, at the bottom of which runs the river Elbe ; but I cannot say that I had reason to fear drowning in it, being perfectly convinced that, in case of a tumble, it was utterly impossible to come alive to the bottom. In many places the road is so narrow, that I could not discern an inch of space between the wheels and the precipice. Yet I was so good a wife not to wake Mr. Wortley, who was fast asleep by my side, to make him share in my fears, since the danger was unavoidable, till I perceived by the bright light of the moon, our postilions nodding on horseback, while the horses were on a full gallop, and I thought it very convenient to call out to desire them to look where they were going. My calling waked Mr. Wortley, and he was much more surprised than myself at the situation we were in, and assured me that he had passed the Alps five times in different places, without ever having gone a road so dangerous. I have been told since it is common to find the bodies of travellers in the Elbe ; but, thank God, that was not our destiny ; and we came safe to Dresden, so much tired with fear and fatigue, it was not possible for me to compose myself to write."

From Dresden the travellers visited Leipzig, and then went

FRANCES, COUNTESS OF MAR.

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to Brunswick, and afterwards to Hanover, where they paid their respects to George I. It was there that Lady Mary first made the acquaintance of the eldest son of the Prince of Wales, Frederick Louis, himself presently Prince of Wales and father of George III. He was then nine years of age.

" I am extremely pleased that I can tell you, without either flattery or partiality, that our young Prince has all the accomplishments that it is possible to have at his age, with an air of sprightliness and understanding, and something so very engaging and easy in his behaviour, that he needs not the advantage of his rank to appear charming. I had the honour of a long conversation with him last night, before the King came in. His governor retired on purpose (as he told me afterwards) that I might make some judgment of his genius, by hearing him speak without constraint ; and I was surprised at the quickness and politeness that appeared in every thing he said ; joined to a person perfectly agreeable, and the fine fair hair of the Princess."

Amazed as Lady Mary was at the size of the Palace at Hanover which, she said, was capable of holding a greater court than that of St. James's, and the opera-house which was larger than that at Vienna, what principally amazed her was the orangery at Herrenhausen and what principally delighted her was the use of stoves, then unknown in England.

" I was very sorry that the ill weather did not permit me to see Herrenhausen in all its beauty ; but, in spite of the snow, I thought the gardens very fine " (she wrote with enthusiasm to Lady Mar). " I was particularly surprised at the vast number of orange trees, much larger than I have ever seen in England, though this climate is certainly colder. But I had more reason to wonder that night at the King's table. There was brought to him from a gentleman of this country, two large baskets full of ripe oranges and lemons of different sorts, many of which were quite new to me ; and, what I thought worth all

the rest, two ripe bananas, which, to my taste, are a fruit perfectly delicious. You know they are naturally the growth of Brazil, and I could not imagine how they could come there but by enchantment. Upon enquiry, I learnt that they have brought their stoves to such perfection, they lengthen the summer as long as they please, giving to every plant the degree of heat it would receive from the sun in its native soil. The effect is very near the same ; I am surprised we do not practise in England so useful an invention.

" This reflection naturally leads me to consider our obstinacy in shaking with cold six months in the year, rather than make use of stoves, which are certainly one of the greatest conveniences of life ; and so far from spoiling the form of a room, they add very much to the magnificence of it, when they are painted and gilt, as at Vienna, or at Dresden, where they are often in the shape of china jars, statues, or fine cabinets, so naturally represented, they are not to be distinguished. If ever I return, in defiance to the fashion, you shall certainly see one in the chamber of,

" Dear sister, &c."

CHAPTER IX

THE EMBASSY TO THE PORTE—II (1717-1718)

Adrianople—Turkish baths—Lady Mary wears Turkish dress—Her description of the costume—Her views on Turkish women—She becomes acquainted with the practice of inoculation—Her son engrafted—Her belief in the operation—She later introduces it into England—Dr. Richard Mead—Richard Steele supports her campaign—Constantinople—Lady Mary homesick—Exposes the British ignorance of Turkish life—Montagu recalled—Addison's private letter to him—Lady Mary gives birth to a daughter—The return journey—The Montagus at Paris—Lady Mary sees her sister, Lady Mar.

THE Montagus returned to Vienna for the new year (1717), but late in January went to Peterwaradin, thence to Belgrade, and arrived at Adrianople at the end of March. It was in Adrianople that Lady Mary made acquaintance with the Turkish Bath, which so impressed her that she sent home a long account of it. It was not until about 1860 that they became popular in England, a century and a half later.

"I went to the bagnio about ten o'clock. It was already full of women. It is built of stone, in the shape of a dome, with no windows but in the roof, which gives light enough, There were five of these domes joined together, the outmost being less than the rest, and serving only as a hall, where the portress stood at the door. Ladies of quality generally give this woman the value of a crown or ten shillings; and I did not forget that ceremony. The next room is a very large one paved with marble, and all round it, raised, two sofas of marble, one

above another. There were four fountains of cold water in this room, falling first into marble basins, and then running on the floor in little channels made for that purpose, which carried the streams into the next room, something less than this, with the same sort of marble sofas but so hot with steams of sulphur proceeding from the baths joining to it, it was impossible to stay there with one's clothes on. The two other domes were the hot baths, one of which had cocks of cold water turning into it, to temper it to what degree of warmth the bathers have a mind to.

" I was in my travelling habit, which is a riding dress, and certainly appeared very extraordinary to them. Yet there was not one of them that shewed the least surprise or impertinent curiosity, but received me with all the obliging civility possible. I know no European court where the ladies would have behaved themselves in so polite a manner to a stranger. I believe in the whole, there were two hundred women, and yet none of those disdainful smiles, or satiric whispers, that never fail in our assemblies when any body appears that is not dressed exactly in the fashion. They repeated over and over to me, " Uzelle, pék uzelle," which is nothing but Charming, very charming.— The first sofas were covered with cushions and rich carpets, on which sat the ladies ; and on the second, their slaves behind them, but without any distinction of rank by their dress, all being in the state of nature, that is, in plain English, stark naked, without any beauty or defect concealed. Yet there was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture amongst them. They walked and moved with the same majestic grace which Milton describes of our general mother. There were many amongst them as exactly proportioned as ever any goddess was drawn by the pencil of Guido or Titian,—and most of their skins shiningly white, only adorned by their beautiful hair divided into many tresses, hanging on their shoulders, braided either with pearl or ribbon, perfectly representing the figures of the Graces.

" I was here convinced of the truth of a reflection I had

often made, that if it was the fashion to go naked, the face would be hardly observed. I perceived that the ladies with the finest skins and most delicate shapes had the greatest share of my admiration, though their faces were sometimes less beautiful than those of their companions. To tell you the truth, I had wickedness enough to wish secretly that Mr. Jervas * could have been there invisible. I fancy it would have very much improved his art, to see so many fine women naked, in different postures, some in conversation, some working, others drinking coffee or sherbet, and many negligently lying on their cushions, while their slaves (generally pretty girls of seventeen or eighteen) were employed in braiding their hair in several pretty fancies. In short, it is the women's coffee-house, where all the news of the town is told, scandal invented, &c.—They generally take this diversion once a-week, and stay there at least four or five hours without getting cold by immediate coming out of the hot bath into the cold room, which was very surprising to me. The lady that seemed the most considerable among them, entreated me to sit by her, and would fain have undressed me for the bath. I excused myself with some difficulty. They being all so earnest in persuading me, I was at last forced to open my shirt, and shew them my stays ; which satisfied them very well, for, I saw, they believed I was so locked up in that machine, that it was not in my own power to open it, which contrivance they attributed to my husband."

Lady Mary was much amused by this last, and referred to the incident in conversation with Joseph Spence. "One of the highest entertainments in Turkey," she told him, "is having you to their baths, and when I was introduced the lady of the house came to undress me, which is another high compliment that they pay to strangers. After she had slipped off my gown and seen my stays she was much struck at the sight of them and cried out to the other ladies in the bath ' Come hither and

* Charles Jervas (1675 ?–1739), portrait painter and translator of *Don Quixote*, the friend of Pope.

see how cruelly the poor English ladies are used by their husbands. You need boast indeed of the superior liberties allowed you, when they lock you up in a box ! ' "

Lady Mary had a Turkish dress made for her, which she frequently wore, when she found that the English costume made her unpleasantly conspicuous. " The ladies at Constantinople used to be extremely surprised to see me go always with my bosom uncovered," she noted. " It was in vain that I told them that everybody did the same thing among us, and alleged everything I could in defence of it. They could never be reconciled to so immodest a custom, as they thought it ; and one of them, after I had been defending it to my utmost, said : ' Oh, my Sultana, you can never defend the manners of your country, even with all your wit ; but I see that you are in pain for them, and shall, therefore, press it no further.' "

Lady Mary was proud of her appearance in her Turkish clothes, and has given a minute description of them :

" The first piece of my dress is a pair of drawers, very full, that reach to my shoes, and conceal the legs more modestly than your petticoats. They are of a thin rose-coloured damask, brocaded with silver flowers, my shoes are of white kid leather, embroidered with gold. Over this hangs my smock, of a fine white silk gauze, edged with embroidery. This smock has wide sleeves, hanging half way down the arm, and is closed at the neck with a diamond button ; but the shape and colour of the bosom very well to be distinguished through it. The *antery* is a waistcoat, made close to the shape, of white and gold damask, with very long sleeves falling back, and fringed with deep gold fringe, and should have diamond or pearl buttons. My *caftan*, of the same stuff with my drawers, is a robe exactly fitted to my shape, and reaching to my feet, with very long strait falling sleeves. Over this is the girdle, of about four fingers broad, which all that can afford have entirely of diamonds or other precious stones ; those who will not be at

that expense, have it of exquisite embroidery on satin ; but it must be fastened before with a clasp of diamonds. The *curdee* is a loose robe they throw off or put on according to the weather, being of a rich brocade (mine is green and gold), either lined with ermine or sables ; the sleeves reach very little below the shoulders. The head-dress is composed of a cap, called *talpock*, which is in winter of fine velvet embroidered with pearls or diamonds, and in summer of a light shining silver stuff. This is fixed on one side of the head, hanging a little way down with a gold tassel, and bound on either side with a circle of diamonds (as I have seen several) or a rich embroidered handkerchief. On the other side of the head, the hair is laid flat ; and here the ladies are at liberty to shew their fancies ; some putting flowers, others a plume of heron's feathers, and, in short, what they please ; but the most general fashion is a large *bouquet* of jewels, made like natural flowers ; that is the buds of pearl ; the roses, of different coloured rubies ; the jessamines, of diamonds ; the jonquils, of topazes, &c., so well set and enamelled, 'tis hard to imagine any thing of that kind so beautiful. The hair hangs at its full length behind, divided into tresses braided with pearl or ribbon, which is always in great quantity."

Much that Lady Mary wrote was of great value in exploding many ill-founded beliefs at home as regards Turkish life, and especially concerning the manners and customs of Turkish women.

"As to their morality or good conduct, I can say, like Harlequin, that 'tis just as it is with you ; and the Turkish ladies don't commit one sin the less for not being Christians. Now I am a little acquainted with their ways, I cannot forbear admiring either the exemplary discretion or extreme stupidity of all the writers that have given accounts of them. 'Tis very easy to see they have more liberty than we have. No woman, of what rank soever, being permitted to go into the streets

without two muslins ; one that covers her face all but her eyes, and another that hides the whole dress of her head, and hangs half way down her back, and their shapes are wholly concealed by a thing they call a *ferigee*, which no woman of any sort appears without ; this has strait sleeves, that reach to their finger-ends, and it laps all round them, not unlike a riding-hood. In winter 'tis of cloth, and in summer plain stuff or silk. You may guess how effectually this disguises them, [so] that there is no distinguishing the great lady from her slave. 'Tis impossible for the most jealous husband to know his wife when he meets her ; and no man dare either touch or follow a woman in the street.

" This perpetual masquerade gives them entire liberty of following their inclinations without danger of discovery. The most usual method of intrigue is, to send an appointment to the lover to meet the lady at a Jew's shop, which are as notoriously convenient as our Indian-houses ; and yet, even those who don't make use of them, do not scruple to go to buy pennyworths, and tumble over rich goods, which are chiefly to be found amongst that sort of people. The great ladies seldom let their gallants know who they are ; and it is so difficult to find it out, that they can very seldom guess at her name they have corresponded with above half a year together. You may easily imagine the number of faithful wives very small in a country where they have nothing to fear from a lover's indiscretion, since we see so many that have the courage to expose themselves to that in this world, and all the threatened punishment of the next, which is never preached to the Turkish damsels. Neither have they much to apprehend from the resentment of their husbands ; those ladies that are rich having all their money in their own hands, which they take with them upon a divorce, with an addition which he is obliged to give them.

" Upon the whole, I look upon the Turkish women as the only free people in the empire : the very Divan pays a respect to them ; and the Grand Signior himself, when a pasha is executed,

never violates the privileges of the *harem* (or women's apartment), which remains unsearched and entire to the widow. They are queens of their slaves, whom the husband has no permission so much as to look upon, except it be an old woman or two that his lady chooses. 'Tis true their law permits them four wives; but there is no instance of a man of quality that makes use of this liberty, or of a woman of rank that would suffer it. When a husband happens to be inconstant (as those things will happen), he keeps his mistress in a house apart, and visits her as privately as he can, just as it is with you. Amongst all the great men here, I only know the *tefterdar* (*i.e.*, treasurer), that keeps a number of she slaves for his own use (that is, on his own side of the house; for a slave once given to serve a lady is entirely at her disposal), and he is spoken of as a libertine, or what we should call a rake, and his wife won't see him, though she continues to live in his house.

"Thus, you see, dear sister, the manners of mankind do not differ so widely as our voyage writers would make us believe. Perhaps it would be more entertaining to add a few surprising customs of my own invention; but nothing seems to me so agreeable as truth, and I believe nothing so acceptable to you."

The most fortunate thing that happened to Lady Mary, and through her to England, during her stay in Adrianople, was being made acquainted with the practice of inoculation, then widely in vogue in Turkey. Though she had no medical knowledge, she made enquiries as to its effect, and soon became convinced that it was very highly beneficial. She was the more interested because an attack of small-pox had somewhat dimmed her beauty. It was to Miss Sarah Chiswell that she unburdened herself of the discovery she had made.

"Those dreadful stories you have heard of the plague have very little foundation in truth. I own I have much ado to reconcile myself to the sound of a word which has always given me such terrible ideas, though I am convinced there is little

more in it than a fever. As a proof of which we passed through two or three towns most violently infected. In the very next house where we lay (in one of those places) two persons died of it. Luckily for me, I was so well deceived that I knew nothing of the matter ; and I was made believe, that our second cook who fell ill here had only a great cold. However, we left our doctor to take care of him, and yesterday they both arrived here in good health ; and I am now let into the secret that he has had the *plague*. There are many that escape it ; neither is the air ever infected. I am persuaded it would be as easy to root it out here as out of Italy and France ; but it does so little mischief, they are not very solicitous about it, and are content to suffer this distemper instead of our variety, which they are utterly unacquainted with.

" *A propos* of distempers, I am going to tell you a thing that I am sure will make you wish yourself here. The small-pox, so fatal, and so general amongst us, is here entirely harmless by the invention of *ingrafting*, which is the term they give it. There is a set of old women who make it their business to perform the operation every autumn, in the month of September, when the great heat is abated. People send to one another to know if any of their family has a mind to have the small-pox ; they make parties for this purpose, and when they are met (commonly fifteen or sixteen together), the old woman comes with a nut-shell full of the matter of the best sort of small-pox, and asks what veins you please to have opened. She immediately rips open that you offer to her with a large needle (which gives you no more pain than a common scratch), and puts into the vein as much venom as can lie upon the head of her needle, and after binds up the little wound with a hollow bit of shell ; and in this manner opens four or five veins. The Grecians have commonly the superstition of opening one in the midde of the forehead, in each arm, and on the breast, to mark the sign of the cross ; but this has a very ill effect, all these wounds leaving little scars, and is not done by those that are not superstitious, who choose to have them in the legs, or that part

of the arm that is concealed. The children or young patients play together all the rest of the day, and are in perfect health to the eighth. Then the fever begins to seize them, and they keep their beds two days, very seldom three. They have very rarely above twenty or thirty in their faces, which never mark; and in eight days' time they are as well as before their illness. Where they are wounded, there remain running sores during the distemper, which I don't doubt is a great relief to it. Every year thousands undergo this operation; and the French embassador says pleasantly, that they take the small-pox here by way of diversion, as they take the waters in other countries. There is no example of any one that has died in it; and you may believe I am very well satisfied of the safety of this experiment, since I intend to try it on my dear little son.

"I am patriot enough to take pains to bring this useful invention into fashion in England; and I should not fail to write to some of our doctors very particularly about it, if I knew any one of them that I thought had virtue enough to destroy such a considerable branch of their revenue for the good of mankind. But that distemper is too beneficial to them not to expose to all their resentment the hardy wight that should undertake to put an end to it. Perhaps, if I live to return, I may, however, have courage to war with them. Upon this occasion admire the heroism in the heart of your friend, &c."

The immediate history of inoculation, so far as Lady Mary is concerned, may here briefly be given. She first heard of the practice in March, 1717, and within a year her faith in its effect was so strong that in the spring of the following year she had her son inoculated at Pera—he was the first English person to undergo the operation. "The boy was engrafted last Tuesday," she wrote to her husband the following Sunday, "and is at this time singing and playing, and very impatient for his supper. . . . I cannot engraft the girl; her nurse has not had the small-pox." It is amusing to learn that the inoculation of the young Edward Wortley Montagu proved presently to have

an advantage which was certainly not at the time of the operation present to the mind of the mother. At the age of six or thereabouts, the child ran away from Westminster school—he was always running away from school—and a reward of £20 and expenses was offered to whoever found him. The advertisement gave the following clue : there are " two marks by which he is easily known, *viz.*, on the back of each arm, about two or three inches above the wrist, a small roundish scar, less than a silver penny, like a large mark of the small-pox."

When Lady Mary returned to London, she carried out her intention to introduce the operation. Dr. Maitland, who had been physician to the mission to the Porte, set up in practice and inoculated under her patronage. The " heathen rite " was vigorously preached against by the clergy and was violently abused by the medical faculty. Undismayed by the powerful opposition, however, she persevered in season and out, until her efforts were crowned with success. She was fortunate in enlisting the co-operation of that distinguished doctor, Richard Mead, celebrated by Pope in his " Epistle to Bolingbroke,"

" I'll do what Mead and Cheselden advise."

Mead, in 1720, when an epidemic of the plague was feared in London, published a treatise : " A Short Discourse concerning Pestilential Contagion and the Methods to be used to Prevent it." It was reprinted seven times within a year, and an eighth edition appeared in 1722. Lady Mary obtained permission, in 1721, to experiment on seven condemned criminals. Mead supervised the inoculations, and all recovered. In the following year two members of the royal family underwent the operation successfully. Thereafter, it became, in most circles, fashionable.

" I suppose," Lady Mary wrote with pardonable pride to Lady Mar in the spring of 1722, " that the same faithful historians give you regular accounts of the growth and spreading of the inoculation of the small-pox, which is become almost a

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

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general practice, attended with great success." Elated as she was at the success that had resulted from her persistent efforts, she was correspondingly distressed when a young relative died of the disease. "I am sorry to inform you of the death, of our nephew, my sister Gower's son, of the small-pox," she said in a letter to Lady Mar in July, 1723. "I think she has a great deal of regret it, in consideration of the offer I made her, two years together, of taking the child home to my house, where I would have inoculated him with the same care and safety I did my own. I know nobody that has hitherto repented the operation: though it has been very troublesome to some fools, who had rather be sick by the doctor's prescriptions, than in health in rebellion to the college."

Among those who supported Lady Mary's campaign was Steele, who congratulated her upon her "godlike delight" of saving "many thousand British lives every year." He wrote on the subject in the *Plain Dealer* (July 3, 1724), in an article that attracted much attention:

"It is the Observation of some Historian; but I forget where I met with it: that *England has ow'd to Women the greatest Blessings she has been distinguish'd by*. In the Case, we are now upon, this Reflection will stand justified.—

"We are indebted to the Reason and Courage of a *Lady*, for the Introduction of this Art; which gives such Strength in its Progress, that the Memory of its Illustrious Foundress will be render'd Sacred by it, to future Ages.

"This Ornament of her Sex, and Country, who ennobles her own *Nobility*, by her Learning, Wit, and Vertues, accompanying her Consort into *Turkey*, observ'd the Benefit of this Practice, with its Frequency, even among those obstinate *Proedestinarians;* and brought it over, for the Service, and the Safety, of her Native *England;* where she consecrated its first effects on the Persons of her own fine Children! And has, already, receiv'd this Glory from it, 'That the Influence of her example has reach'd as high as the Blood Royal.' And our noblest, and

most ancient Families, in Confirmation of her happy Judgment, add the daily Experience of those, who are most dear to them.

" I Have seen a short Poetical Essay, on the Occasion we are now treating of. I wou'd say, if I meant the Verses an *Encomium* they shou'd be envied for, ' That their *Subject* need not blush at them ! '

On Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's *bringing with her, out of* Turkey, *the Art of Inoculating the* Small-Pox.

When Greece, *reviving into short Delight,*
Felt Pride, and Comfort, at Our *Muse's Sight* :
The Rival'd Nine *no sooner saw her Face,*
But ev'n their Envy *gave their* Wonder *Place* !
Charm'd into Love, *of what eclips'd their Fame* !
They mak'd Apollo, *with her pow'rful Name.*
See !—*God of* Grecian *Wit* ! Urania *cries,*
How sweet a Muse, *the Western World supplies* !
Say, shou'd she ask some Favour, from your throne,
What could you bid *her* take, *that's not* her own ?
Sparkling in Charms, the heav'nly Stranger view
So grac'd ! *she scarce can owe a* Beam *to* You !
Beauty, *with Love,* her *Pow'r to* Yours *prefers* :
And Wit, *and* Learning, *are, already,* Hers !
Rous'd, at her name,—*receding from her* Eyes,
The gazing God rose slow, in soft Surprise !
Fair Miracle, *he said,—and paus'd a while* :
Then, thus,—Sweet Glory, *of your envied Isle* !
Charm'd, and oblig'd, lest, we ungrateful seem,
Bear hence, at least, one Mark *of our Esteem.*
One, *of my three great Claims,* your *Wish may fit ;*
Whose Voice is Musick : *and whose Thoughts are* Wit !
Physick, *alone, remains, to grant you, here—*
A *Skill* ! *your godlike* Pity *will* endear.
Form'd to give Wounds, *which must no Ease procure,*
Atone *your Influ'nce, by new Arts, to* cure,
Beauty's chief Foe, a fear'd, and fierce Disease !
Bows, at my Beck ; and knows its God's *Decrees.*
Breath'd, in this Kiss, *take Pow'r to tame its Rage* :
And, from its Rancour, free *the rescu'd Age.*
High, o'er each Sex, in Double *Empire, fit* :
Protecting Beauty, *and inspiring Wit.*

When Lady Mary had been abroad for a year, she became homesick and began to long for England. It was really very dull for her in Turkey, even though she could pass the time of day in the language of the country. Supervising the nurses

of her child did not take a large share of her time ; and she found only a mild excitement in going into the bazaar in native woman's attire to collect Oriental rugs and whatnot.

" To say truth, I am sometimes very weary of this singing, and dancing, and sunshine, and wish for the smoke and impertinencies in which you toil, though I endeavour to persuade myself that I live in a more agreeable variety than you do ; and that Monday, setting of partridges—Tuesday, reading English —Wednesday, studying the Turkish language (in which, by the way, I am already very learned)—Thursday, classical authors—Friday, spent in writing—Saturday, at my needle—and Sunday, admitting of visits, and hearing music, is a better way of disposing the week, than Monday, at the drawing-room—Tuesday, Lady Mohun's—Wednesday, the opera—Thursday, the play—Friday, Mrs. Chetwynd's, &c., a perpetual round of hearing the same scandal, and seeing the same follies acted over and over, which here affect me no more than they do other dead people. I can now hear of displeasing things with pity, and without indignation. The reflection on the great gulf between you and me, cools all news that come hither. I can neither be sensibly touched with joy nor grief, when I consider that possibly the cause of either is removed before the letter comes to my hands. But (as I said before) this indolence does not extend to my few friendships ; I am still warmly sensible of yours and Mr. Congreve's, and desire to live in your remembrances, though dead to all the world beside."

There is no doubt that it was to her pen that Lady Mary had recourse in her endeavours to overcome ennui. A perusal of the letters written during this first sojourn in Europe shows that nothing escaped her eye, trivial or serious, from the washing of the Rotterdam pavements to the dwarfs at the Court of Vienna, from the palaces of the great to the cosmetics used by the women.

Occasionally Lady Mary became impatient at the ignorance of her friends as regards the Near East.

" I heartily beg your ladyship's pardon ; but I really could not forbear laughing heartily at your letter, and the commissions you are pleased to honour me with " (she wrote to one of her acquaintances from Belgrade Village in June, 1717).

" You desire me to buy you a Greek slave, who is to be mistress of a thousand good qualities. The Greeks are subjects, and not slaves. Those who are to be bought in that manner, are either such as are taken in war, or stolen by the Tartars from Russia, Circassia, or Georgia, and are such miserable, awkward, poor wretches, you would not think any of them worthy to be your housemaids. 'Tis true that many thousands were taken in the Morea ; but they have been, most of them, redeemed by the charitable contributions of the Christians, or ransomed by their own relations at Venice. The fine slaves that wait upon the great ladies, or serve the pleasures of the great men, are all bought at the age of eight or nine years old, and educated with great care, to accomplish them in singing, dancing, embroidery, &c. They are commonly Circassians, and their patron never sells them, except it is as a punishment for some very great fault. If ever they grow weary of them, they either present them to a friend, or give them their freedom. Those that are exposed to sale at the markets are always either guilty of some crime, or so entirely worthless that they are of no use at all. I am afraid you will doubt the truth of this account, which I own is very different from our common notions in England ; but it is no less truth for all that.

" Your whole letter is full of mistakes from one end to the other. I see you have taken your ideas of Turkey from that worthy author Dumont, who has written with equal ignorance and confidence. 'Tis a particular pleasure to me here, to read the voyages to the Levant, which are generally so far removed from the truth, and so full of absurdities, I am very well diverted with them. They never fail giving you an account of the women, whom 'tis certain they never saw, and talking very wisely of the genius of the men, into whose company they are never admitted ; and very often describe mosques, which they dare

not peep into. The Turks are very proud, and will not converse with a stranger they are not assured is considerable in his own country. I speak of the men of distinction; for, as to the ordinary fellows, you may imagine what ideas their conversation can give of the general genius of the people.

"I am more inclined, out of a true female spirit of contradiction, to tell you the falsehood of a great part of what you find in authors; as, for example, in the admirable Mr. Hill, who so gravely asserts, that he saw in Sancta Sophia a sweating pillar, very balsamic for disordered heads. There is not the least tradition of any such matter; and I suppose it was revealed to him in a vision during his wonderful stay in the Egyptian catacombs; for I am sure he never heard of any such miracle here.

"'Tis also very pleasant to observe how tenderly he and all his brethren voyage-writers lament the miserable confinement of the Turkish ladies, who are perhaps freer than any ladies in the universe, and are the only women in the world that lead a life of uninterrupted pleasure exempt from cares; their whole time being spent in visiting, bathing, or the agreeable amusement of spending money, and inventing new fashions. A husband would be thought mad that exacted any degree of economy from his wife, whose expenses are no way limited but by her own fancy. 'Tis his business to get money, and hers to spend it: and this noble prerogative extends itself to the very meanest of the sex. Here is a fellow that carries embroidered handkerchiefs upon his back to sell, as miserable a figure as you may suppose such a mean dealer, yet I'll assure you his wife scorns to wear anything less than cloth of gold; has her ermine furs, and a very handsome set of jewels for her head. They go abroad when and where they please. 'Tis true they have no public places but the bagnios, and there can only be seen by their own sex; however, that is a diversion they take great pleasure in."

In the meantime, Montagu's conduct of affairs was much

criticised at home, and Lord Stanhope's Administration, which had come into power in April, 1717, decided to recall him. This invidious task fell upon his old friend Addison, now Secretary of State for the Southern Department. The recall was notified to those concerned in a circular letter dated October 13. Addison, in a private letter dated September 28, notified him of the impending change :

" Having been confined to my chamber for some time by a dangerous fit of sickness, I find, upon my coming abroad, some things have passed which I think myself obliged to communicate to you, not as the Secretary to the Ambassador, but as an humble servant to his friend. . . . Our great men are of opinion that your being possessed [of the reversion of certain places] (which they look upon as sure and sudden) it would be agreeable to your inclinations, as well as for the King's service, which you are so able to promote in Parliament, rather to return to your own country than to live at Constantinople. For this reason, they have thought of relieving Mr. Stanyan, who is now at the Imperial Court, and of joining Sir Robert Sutton with him in the mediation of a peace between the Emperor and the Turks. I need not suggest to you that Mr. Stanyan is in great favour at Vienna, and how necessary it is to humour that Court in the present juncture. Besides, as it would have been for your honour to have acted as sole mediator in such a negotiation, perhaps it would not have been so agreeable to you to act only in commission. This was suggested to me the other day by one of our first ministers, who told me that he believed Sir R. Sutton's being joined in a mediation, which was carried on by my Lord Paget singly, would be shocking to you, but that they could be more free with a person of Mr. Stanyan's quality. I find by his Majesty's way of speaking of you, that you are much in his favour and esteem, and I fancy you would find your ease and advantage more in being nearer his person than at the distance you are from him at present. I omit no opportunity of doing you justice where I think it is for your service, and wish

I could know your mind as to these several particulars by a more speedy and certain conveyance, that I might act accordingly to the utmost of my powers. Madame Kielmansegg and my Lady Hervey desire me to forward the enclosed to my Lady Mary Wortley, to whom I beg you will deliver them with my most humble regards."

What Montagu's feelings were can only be imagined. It is almost certain that he felt himself vastly aggrieved. Nothing could have been more delicate or complimentary than Addison's letter, but it did not, and could not, disguise the main fact. It was easy for the Secretary of State to suggest that at least one reason for the recall was that Montagu must be anxious to return, but that certainly could not have deceived the Ambassador who was, indeed, so little anxious to get home that he remained at Constantinople until the following June. Likewise, the statement that he would be able to promote the King's service in Parliament, flattering as it read, meant, of course, nothing at all. Certainly, though Montagu sat in the House of Commons until his death, office was never offered him in any Administration.

Lady Mary found herself again with child. Whether this pleased her or not no one can say, but in a letter to Mrs. Thistlethwayte she treated the incident divertingly enough.

" I wish I could return your goodness with some diverting accounts from hence. But I know not what part of the scenes here would gratify your curiosity, or whether you have any curiosity at all for things so far distant. To say the truth, I am, at this present writing, not very much turned for the recollection of what is diverting, my head being wholly filled with the preparations necessary for the increase of my family, which I expect every day. You may easily guess at my uneasy situation. But I am, however, in some degree comforted, by the glory that accrues to me from it, and a reflection on the contempt I should otherwise fall under. You won't

know what to make of this speech : but, in this country, it is more despicable to be married and not fruitful, than it is with us to be fruitful before marriage. They have a notion, that, whenever a woman leaves off bringing children, it is because she is too old for that business, whatever her face says to the contrary, and this opinion makes the ladies here so ready to make proofs of their youth (which is as necessary, in order to be a received beauty, as it is to shew the proofs of nobility, to be admitted knight of Malta), that they do not content themselves with using the natural means, but fly to all sorts of quackeries, to avoid the scandal of being past child-bearing, and often kill themselves by them. Without any exaggeration, all the women of my acquaintance that have been married ten years, have twelve or thirteen children ; and the old ones boast of having had five-and-twenty or thirty a-piece, and are respected according to the number they have produced. When they are with child, it is their common expression to say, They hope God will be so merciful to them to send two this time ; and when I have asked them sometimes, How they expected to provide for such a flock as they desire ? they answered, That the plague will certainly kill half of them ; which, indeed, generally happens, without much concern to the parents, who are satisfied with the vanity of having brought forth so plentifully.

" The French Ambassadress is forced to comply with this fashion as well as myself. She has not been here much above a year, and has lain in once, and is big again. What is most wonderful is, the exemption they seem to enjoy from the curse entailed on the sex. They see all company the day of their delivery, and, at the fortnight's end, return visits, set out in their jewels and new clothes. I wish I may find the influence of the climate in this particular. But I fear I shall continue an Englishwoman in that affair."

Lady Mary gave birth to a daughter, Mary, in February. " I don't mention this as one of my diverting adventures," she

wrote to Lady Mar, " though I must own that it is not half so mortifying here as in England, there being as much difference as there is between a little cold in the head, which sometimes happens here, and the consumptive cough, so common in London. Nobody keeps their house a month for lying in ; and I am not so fond of any of our customs to retain them when they are not necessary. I returned my visits at three weeks' end."

So soon as possible after this domestic event, preparations for the return journey were made. The party went by sea to Tunis, thence to Genoa, Turin, Lyons, and Paris. Their arrival at Paris in October was notified by Lady Mar to her husband : " You'll be surprised to hear 657 [*i.e.*, Lady Mary] is here. She arrived the day after me. You may believe how much incognito I am. 'Twas in vain to attempt being so. 'Twould fill a whole letter to tell you the people that have been to see me. I was very much pleased at seeing 657 and she appeared to be the same." The sisters had not met for three years.

CHAPTER X

A SCANDAL

Montagu re-enters the House of Commons—His miserliness—Pope refers to it—Comments on Society—Lady Mary and a first-class scandal—Rémond—His admiration for her—Her imprudent letters to him—The South Sea Bubble—Lady Mary speculates for Rémond—She loses money for him—He demands to be reimbursed—He threatens to publish her letters—She states the case in letters to Lady Mar—Lady Mary meets Pope—His letters to her when she was abroad—He affects to be in love with her—Her matter-of-fact replies—Her parody of his verses, " On John Hughes and Sarah Drew."

MONTAGU, on his return to England, again entered the House of Commons, where he represented Huntingdon from 1722 to 1734, and then for Peterborough from 1734 to 1747 and from 1754 to 1761. Whether it was lack of ambition or just want of appreciation of his talents by the leaders of his party, there is no evidence. Even with his family connections and his wealth, he was never offered a place in any Administration, nor, it must be confessed, did he in any way distinguish himself in Parliament. As the years passed, his chief pleasure, if indeed it was not his only one, was in the hoarding of money—in this pursuit he was splendidly successful. From references to Lady Mary in contemporary correspondence, it would appear that she too had no small streak of the miser in her. Pope, after his quarrel with her, referred to Montagu as " Worldly," " Shylock," and " Gripus," and in the fourth Epistle of the *Essay on Man* wrote :

> " Is yellow dirt the passion of thy life ?
> Look but on Gripus and Gripus' wife."

Also he lampooned them under the style of Avidieu and Avidieu's wife, who

> " Sell their presented partridges or fruits,
> And humbly live on rabbits and on roots ;
> One half-pint bottle serves them both to dine,
> And is at once their vinegar and wine.
> But on some lucky day (as when they found
> A lost bank note, or heard their son was drowned),
> At such a feast old vinegar to spare
> Is what two souls so generous cannot bear :
> Oil, though it stink, they drop by drop impart,
> But souse the cabbage with a bounteous heart."

Lady Mary took her place, as of right, as a leader of society, and for a while plunged into the gaieties of the town. " Public places flourish more than ever," she wrote to her sister. " We have assemblies for every day in the week, besides Court, operas, and masquerades. With youth and money, 'tis certainly possible to be well diverted in spite of malice and ill-nature, though they are more and more powerful every day. For my part, as it is my established opinion that this globe of ours is no better than a Holland cheese, and the walkers about in it mites, I possess my soul in patience, let what will happen—and I should feel tolerably easy, though a great rat came and ate half of it." That is a philosophical outlook with a vengeance !

However, Lady Mary managed on the whole to enjoy herself. " The town improves in gaiety every day ; the young people are younger than they used to be, and all the old are grown young. Nothing is talked of but entertainments of gallantry by land and water, and we insensibly begin to taste all the joys of arbitrary power. Politics are no more ; nobody pretends to wince or kick under their burdens ; but we go on cheerfully with our bells at our ears, ornamented with ribands, and highly contented with our present condition ; so much for the general state of the nation," she made her comment on polite circles. " We are much mistaken here as to our ideas of Paris—to hear gallantry has deserted it, sounds as extraordinary

to me as a want of ice in Greenland. We have nothing but ugly faces in this country, but more lovers than ever. There are but three pretty men in England, and they are all in love with me, at this present writing. This will amaze you extremely ; but if you were to see the reigning girls at present, I will assure you, there is very little difference between them and old women."

Lady Mary could never resist a good story, and, indeed, never made any attempt to do so, and she usually wrote them down to amuse Lady Mar.

" 'Tis but reasonable I should conclude with a farce, that I may not leave you in ill humour. I have so good an opinion of your taste, to believe Harlequin in person will never make you laugh so much as the Earl of Stair's furious passion for Lady Walpole (aged fourteen and some months). Mrs. Murray undertook to bring the business to bear, and provided the opportunity (a great ingredient you'll say) ; but the young lady proved skittish. She did not only turn this heroic flame into present ridicule, but exposed all his generous sentiments, to divert her husband and father-in-law. His lordship is gone to Scotland ; and if there was anybody wicked enough to write about it, there is a subject worthy the pen of the best ballad-maker in Grub-street."

. . . . . .

" Lord Townshend has renewed his lease of life by his French journey, and is at present situated in his house in Grosvenor-street in perfect health. My good lady is coming from the Bath to meet him with the joy you may imagine. Kitty Edwin has been the companion of his [her ?] pleasures there. The alliance seems firmer than ever between them, after their Tunbridge battles, which served for the entertainment of the public. The secret cause is variously guessed at ; but it is certain Lady Townshend came into the great room gently behind her friend, and tapping her on the shoulder with her fan, said aloud, *I know where, how, and who.* These mysterious words drew the

attention of all the company, and had such an effect upon poor Kitty, she was carried to her lodgings in strong hysterics. However, by the intercession of prudent mediators peace was concluded ; and if the conduct of these heroines was considered in a true light, perhaps it might serve for an example even to higher powers, by showing that the surest method to obtain a lasting and honourable peace, is to begin with vigorous war. But leaving these reflections, which are above my capacity, permit me to repeat my desire of hearing often from you. Your letters would be my greatest pleasure if I had flourished in the first years of Henry the Eighth's court ; judge then how welcome they are to me in the present desolate state of this deserted town of London."

Lady Mary's own morals were more than once assailed ; but this did not prevent her humorous attack on society at large : " Those things [Bills of Divorce] grow more fashionable every day, and in a little time won't be at all scandalous. The best expedient for the public, and to prevent the expense of private families, would be a general act of divorcing all the people of England. You know those that pleased might marry again ; and it would save the reputation of several ladies that are now in peril of being exposed every day."

Not long after Lady Mary had returned to England, about the winter of 1720, she, who loved to retail malicious stories about others, found herself, to her great dismay, the subject of a first-class scandal.

When Lady Mary was in Paris, Rémond was introduced to her by the Abbé Conti. He had seen a letter or two addressed by her to the Abbé, and expressed himself with enthusiasm of her brilliance as a correspondent. Presently he came to England, and sought out Lady Mary, who was no more immune from flattery than most folk of either sex. How far the intimacy developed from the platonic to the amorous it is impossible to say. That Rémond made love to her there can be little doubt. Sir Leslie Stephen holds the view that she did not

encourage his passion. Anyhow, it is beyond question that she wrote him imprudent letters, which he was prudent enough to keep.

Lady Mary basked in the admiration of Rémond, and thought to reward him for his intelligence, at no cost to herself, by putting him on to " a good thing." Also, getting a little fearsome of his very marked attentions, or perhaps it was only wearying of them, she thought, as she confessed to her sister, the Countess of Mar, it would be the more easy to rid herself of this somewhat turbulent lover.

At this time the famous " boom " known as the South Sea Bubble was at the height of its brief career. The South Sea Company had taken over the National Debt, on terms, and its stock, carefully manipulated, rose by leaps and bounds. In 1714 the stock stood at 85. After the defeat of the rebellion of 1715, it was quoted at prices varying from par to 106. In the autumn of 1719, when rumours of its great scheme were spread about the town, it rose to 126. Early in the following year it could not be purchased for less than 400. It fluctuated wildly, going up and down hundreds of points. On June 2, 1720, it went up in the morning to 890, in the afternoon fell to 640 ; and many who were speculating in differences were utterly ruined. Later in the day it recovered, though only to 770. Ultimately it rose to 1,000. Of course the prices were fictitious, but everyone in society tried their luck, and while some came out of it with a fortune, the majority lost practically every penny they had. The directors, most of whom were guilty of fraud, made vast sums of money. That astute financier, Robert Walpole, speculated on a vast scale, sold out before the slump, and realised a fortune more than sufficient to enable him to rebuild Houghton and to gather together his famous collection of pictures. On the other hand the Duke of Portland, who held on too long, was so hard hit that he had to solicit the post of Captain-General of Jamaica.

Rémond held some South Sea stock, and, acting on Lady Mary's advice, sold out at a considerable profit. Not content

LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

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with his gains, however, he insisted, just before his departure for France, on leaving in Lady Mary's hands £900 for investment as opportunity should arise. Reluctantly Lady Mary consented—she would probably have agreed almost to anything, so anxious was she that Rémond should leave the country.

On August 22, 1720, Pope, with the best intentions in the world, wrote to Lady Mary: "I was made acquainted last night that I might depend upon it as a certain gain to buy the South Sea stock at the present price, which will assuredly rise in some weeks or less. I can be as sure of this as the nature of any such thing will allow, from the first and best hands, and therefore have despatched the bearer with all speed to you." No doubt the phrase "the first and best hands," was intended to convey the fact that his informant was his friend and neighbour, James Craggs the younger, the Secretary of State who was so deeply involved in the affairs of the South Sea Company that when the "bubble" burst he only escaped prosecution by conveniently dying of small-pox. Acting on the hint given by Pope, Lady Mary purchased stock for herself and Rémond. The stock fell rapidly—in August it stood at 750 and in December at 130. What she lost is not known, but she had been sufficiently involved to make her desire to sell her diamonds, and more than once she asked Lady Mar if there was a market for the jewels in Paris. Rémond's £900 had dwindled to £400. On receiving these distressful tidings, the Frenchman believed, or affected to believe, that he had been swindled, and he threatened, unless he were repaid in full, he would publish Lady Mary's letters to him. Lady Mary's fear was lest the matter should come to the cognisance of her husband: it would certainly be unfair to Montagu to suggest that he might not have forgiven his wife for a love-affair; but he would certainly never have pardoned her any transaction that cost him money.

Many malicious things were said about this business. Walpole gave a version utterly discreditable to Lady Mary, and Pope, after the quarrel, referred to the matter in the second book of the *Dunciad*:

" Whence hapless Monsieur much complains at Paris
Of wrongs from Duchesses and Lady Maries."

The case was put by Lady Mary in a series of letters to her sister, Lady Mar, to whom she could unburden herself freely, and who might be able to influence Rémond, who was then at Paris.

[1721.]

" From the tranquil and easy situation in which you left me, dear sister, I am reduced to that of the highest degree of vexation, which I need not set out to you better than by the plain matter of fact, which I heartily wish I had told you long since ; and nothing hindered me but a certain *mauvaise honte* which you are reasonable enough to forgive, as very natural, though not very excusable where there is nothing to be ashamed of ; since I can only accuse myself of too much good-nature, or at worst too much credulity, though I believe there never was more pains taken to deceive any body. In short, a person whose name is not necessary, because you know it, took all sorts of methods, during almost two years [*sic*], to persuade me that there never was so extraordinary an attachment (or what you please to call it) as they had for me. This ended in coming over to make me a visit against my will, and, as was pretended, very much against their interest. I cannot deny I was very silly in giving the least credit to this stuff. But if people are so silly, you'll own 'tis natural for any body that is good-natured to pity and be glad to serve a person they believe unhappy upon their account. It came into my head, out of a high point of generosity (for which I wish myself hanged), to do this creature all the good I possibly could, since 'twas impossible to make them happy their own way. I advised him very strenuously to sell out of the subscription, and in compliance to my advice he did so ; and in less than two days saw he had done very prudently. After a piece of service of this nature, I thought I could more decently press his departure, which his follies made me think necessary for me. He took leave of me with so many tears and grimaces (which I can't imagine how he could counter-

feit) as really moved my compassion ; and I had much ado to keep to my first resolution of exacting his absence, which he swore would be his death. I told him that there was no other way in the world I would not be glad to serve him in, but that his extravagances made it utterly impossible for me to keep him company. He said that he would put into my hands the money that I had won for him, and desired me to improve it, saying that if he had enough to buy a small estate, and retire from the world, 'twas all the happiness he hoped for in it. I represented to him that if he had so little money as he said, 'twas ridiculous to hazard at all. He replied that 'twas too little to be of any value, and he would either have it double or quit. After many objections on my side and replies on his, I was so weak to be overcome by his entreaties, and flattered myself also that I was doing a very heroic action, in trying to make a man's fortune though I did not care for his addresses. He left me with these imaginations, and my first care was to employ his money to the best advantage. I laid it all out in stock, the general discourse and private intelligence then scattered about being of a great rise. You may remember it was two or three days before the fourth subscription, and you were with me when I paid away the money to Mr. Binfield. I thought I had managed prodigious well in selling out the said stock the day after the shutting the books (for a small profit) to Cox and Cleeve, goldsmiths of very good reputation. When the opening of the books came, my men went off, leaving the stock upon my hands, which was already sunk from near nine hundred pounds to four hundred pounds. I immediately writ him word of this misfortune, with the sincere sorrow natural to have upon such an occasion, and asked his opinion as to the selling the stock remaining in. He made me no answer to this part of my letter, but a long eloquent oration of miseries of another nature. I attributed this silence to his disinterested neglect of his money ; but, however, resolved to make no more steps in his business without direct orders, after having been so unlucky. This occasioned many letters to no purpose ; but the very post after

you left London, I received a letter from him, in which he told me that he had discovered all my tricks ; that he was convinced I had all his money remaining untouched : and he would have it again, or he would print all my letters to him ; which though, God knows, very innocent in the main, yet may admit of ill constructions, besides the monstrousness of being exposed in such a manner. I hear from other people that he is liar enough to publish that I have borrowed the money of him ; though I have a note under his hand, by which he desires me to employ it in the funds, and acquits me of being answerable for the losses that may happen. At the same time, I have attestations and witnesses of the bargains I made, so that nothing can be clearer than my integrity in this business ; but that does not hinder me from being in the utmost terror for the consequences (as you may easily guess) of his villany ; the very story of which appears so monstrous to me, I can hardly believe myself while I write it ; though I omit (not to tire you) a thousand aggravating circumstances. I cannot forgive myself the folly of ever regarding one word he said ; and I see now that his lies have made me wrong several of my acquaintances, and you among the rest, for having said (as he told me) horrid things against me to him. 'Tis long since that your behaviour has acquitted you in my opinion ; but I thought I ought not to mention, to hurt him with you, what was perhaps more misunderstanding, or mistake, than a designed lie. But he has very amply explained his character to me. What is very pleasant is, that, but two posts before, I received a letter from him full of higher flights than ever. I beg your pardon (dear sister) for this tedious account ; but you see how necessary 'tis for me to get my letters from this madman. Perhaps the best way is by fair means ; at least, they ought to be first tried. I would have you, then (my dear sister), try to make the wretch sensible of the truth of what I advance, without asking for the letters, which I have already asked for. Perhaps you may make him ashamed of his infamous proceedings by talking of me, without taking notice that you know of his threats, only of my dealings.

I take this method to be the most likely to work upon him. I beg you would send me a full and true account of this detestable affair (enclosed to Mrs. Murray). If I had not been the most unlucky creature in the world, his letter would have come while you were here, that I might have shewed you both his note and the other people's. I knew he was discontented, but was far from imagining a possibility of this thing. I give you a great deal of trouble, but you see I shall owe you the highest obligation if you can serve me : the very endeavouring of it is a tie upon me to serve you the rest of my life without reserve and with eternal gratitude.

[Twickenham, 1721.]

" I am now at Twickenham : 'tis impossible to tell you, dear sister, what agonies I suffer every post-day ; my health really suffers so much from my fears, that I have reason to apprehend the worst consequences. If that monster acted on the least principles of reason, I should have nothing to fear, since 'tis certain that after he has exposed me he will get nothing by it. Mr. Wortley can do nothing for his satisfaction I am not willing to do myself. I desire not the least indulgence of any kind. Let him put his affair into the hands of any lawyer whatever. I am willing to submit to any examination ; 'tis impossible to make a fairer offer than this is : whoever he employs may come to me hither on several pretences. I desire nothing from him, but that he would send no letters nor messages to my house at London, where Mr. Wortley now is. I am come hither in hopes of benefit from the air, but I carry my distemper about me in an anguish of mind that visibly decays my body every day. I am too melancholy to talk of any other subject. Let me beg you (dear sister) to take some care of this affair, and think you have it in your power to do more than save the life of a sister that loves you.

[Twickenham, 1721.]

" I give you many thanks (my dear sister) for the trouble you

have given yourself in my affair ; but am afraid 'tis not yet effectual. I must beg you to let him know I am now at Twickenham, and that whoever has his procuration may come here on divers pretences, but must by no means go to my house at London. I wonder you can think Lady Stafford has not writ to him ; she shewed me a long plain letter to him several months ago ; as a demonstration he received it, I saw his answer. 'Tis true she treated him with the contempt he deserved, and told him she would never give herself the trouble of writing again to so despicable a wretch. She is willing to do yet further, and write to the Duke of Villeroi about it, if I think it proper. Rémond does nothing but lie, and either does not, or will not, understand what is said to him. You will forgive me troubling you so often with this business ; the importance of it is the best excuse ; in short,

> ' ——'tis joy or sorrow, peace or strife,
> 'Tis all the colour of remaining life.'

I can foresee nothing else to make me unhappy, and, I believe, shall take care another time not to involve myself in difficulties by an overplus of heroic generosity.

" I am, dear sister, ever yours, with the utmost esteem and affection. If I get over this cursed affair, my style may enliven."

[June, 1721.]

" I have just received your letter of May 30th, and am surprised, since you own the receipt of my letter, that you give me not the least hint concerning the business that I writ so earnestly to you about. Till that is over, I am as little capable of hearing or repeating news, as I should be if my house was on fire. I am sure, a great deal must be in your power ; the hurting of me can be in no way his interest. I am ready to assign, or deliver the money for £500 stock, to whoever he will name, if he will send my letters into Lady Stafford's hands ; which, were he sincere in his offer of burning them, he

would readily do. Instead of that, he has writ a letter to Mr. W. [Wortley] to inform him of the whole affair : luckily for me, the person he has sent it to assures me it shall never be delivered ; but I am not the less obliged to his good intentions. For God's sake, do something to set my mind at ease from this business, and then I will not fail to write you regular accounts of all your acquaintance."

[July (?), 1721.]

" I cannot enough thank you, dear sister, for the trouble you give yourself in my affairs, though I am still so unhappy to find your care very ineffectual. I have actually in my present possession a formal letter directed to Mr. Wortley to acquaint him with the whole business. You may imagine the inevitable eternal misfortunes it would have thrown me into, had it been delivered by the person to whom it was intrusted. I wish you would make him sensible of the infamy of this proceeding, which can no way in the world turn to his advantage. Did I refuse giving the strictest account, or had I not the clearest demonstration in my hands of the truth and sincerity with which I acted, there might be some temptation to this baseness ; but all he can expect by informing Mr. Wortley is to hear him repeat the same things I assert ; he will not retrieve one farthing, and I am for ever miserable. I beg no more of him than to direct any person, man or woman, either lawyer, broker, or a person of quality, to examine me ; and as soon as he has sent a proper authority to discharge me on enquiry, I am ready to be examined. I think no offer can be fairer from any person whatsoever ; his conduct towards me is so infamous, that I am informed I might prosecute him by law if he was here ; he demanding the whole sum as a debt from Mr. Wortley, at the same time I have a note under his hand signed to prove the contrary. I beg with the utmost earnestness that you would make him sensible of his error. I believe 'tis very necessary to say something to fright him. I am persuaded, if he was talked to in a style of that kind, he would not dare to attempt to

ruin me. I have a great inclination to write seriously to your lord about it, since I desire to determine this affair in the fairest and the clearest manner. I am not at all afraid of making any body acquainted with it; and if I did not fear making Mr. Wortley uneasy (who is the only person from whom I would conceal it), all the transactions should have been long since enrolled in Chancery. I have already taken care to have the broker's depositions taken before a lawyer of reputation and merit. I deny giving him no satisfaction; and after that offer, I think there is no man of honour that would refuse signifying to him that as 'tis all he can desire, so, if he persists in doing me an injury, he may repent it. You know how far 'tis proper to take this method, I say nothing of the uneasiness I am under, 'tis far beyond any expression; my obligation would be proportionable to any body that would deliver me from it, and I should not think it paid by all the services of my life."

[Twickenham, June (?), 1721.]

"DEAR SISTER,

"Having this occasion, I would not omit writing, though I have received no answer to my two last. The bearer is well acquainted with my affair, though not from me, till he mentioned it to me first, having heard it from those to whom Rémond had told it with all the false colours he pleased to lay on. I shewed him the formal commission I had to employ the money, and all the broker's testimonies taken before Delpeeke, with his certificate. Your remonstrances have hitherto had so little effect, that R. [Rémond] will neither send a letter of attorney to examine my accounts, or let me be in peace. I received a letter from him but two posts since, in which he renews his threats except I send him the whole sum, which is as much in my power as it is to send a million. I can easily comprehend that he may be ashamed to send a procuration, which must convince the world of all the lies he has told. For my part, I am so willing to be rid of the plague of hearing from him, I desire no better than to restore him with all expedition

the money I have in my hands ; but I will not do it without a general acquittance in due form, not to have fresh demands every time he wants money. If he thinks that he has a larger sum to receive than I offer, why does he not name a procurator to examine me ? If he is content with that sum, I only insist on the acquittance for my own safety. I am ready to send it to him, with full license to tell as many lies as he pleases afterwards. I am weary with troubling you with repetitions which cannot be more disagreeable to you than they are to me. I have had, and still have, so much vexation with this execrable affair, 'tis impossible to describe it. I had rather talk to you of any thing else, but it fills my whole head."

Lady Mary was no coward, but when she heard that Rémond intended to come to London in connection with this business, she was at first in despair However, she summoned her courage to aid, and asked Lady Mar to tell him that if he was spoiling for a fight she would do her best to indulge him.

" I send you, dear sister, by Lady Lansdowne this letter, accompanied with the only present that was ever sent me by that monster. I beg you to return it immediately. I am told he is preparing to come to London. Let him know that 'tis not at all necessary for receiving his money or examining my accounts ; he has nothing to do but to send a letter of attorney to whom he pleases (without exception), and I will readily deliver up what I have in my hands, and his presence will not obtain one farthing more : his design then can only be to expose my letters here. I desire you would assure him that my first step shall be to acquaint my Lord Stair * with all his obligations to him, as soon as I hear he is in London ; and if he dares to give me further trouble, I shall take care to have him rewarded in a stronger manner than he expects ; there is nothing more true than this ; and I solemnly swear, that if all

* John Dalrymple, second Earl of Stair (1673-1747), British Ambassador at Paris, 1715-1720.

the credit or money that I have in the world can do it, either for friendship or hire, I shall not fail to have him used as he deserves ; and since I know this journey can only be designed to expose me, I shall not value what noise is made. Perhaps you may prevent it ; I leave you to judge of the most proper method ; 'tis certain no time should be lost ; fear is his predominant passion, and I believe you may fright him from coming hither, where he will certainly find a reception very disagreeable to him."

" September 6, 1721.

" I have consulted my lawyer, and he says I cannot, with safety to myself, deposit the money I have received into other hands, without the express order of Rémond ; and he is so unreasonable, that he will neither send a procuration to examine my accounts, or any order for me to transfer his stock into another name. I am heartily weary of the trust, which has given me so much trouble, and can never think myself safe till I am quite got rid of it : rather than be plagued any longer with the odious keeping, I am willing to abandon my letters to his discretion. I desire nothing more of him than an order to place his money in other hands, which methinks should not be so hard to obtain, since he is so dissatisfied with my management ; but he seems to be bent to torment me, and will not even touch his money, because I beg it of him. I wish you would represent these things to him ; for my own part, I live in so much uneasiness about it, that I sometimes weary of life itself."

[October (?) 1721.]

" I cannot forbear (dear sister) accusing you of unkindness that you take so little care of a business of the last consequence to me. R. [Rémond] writ to me some time ago, to say if I would immediately send him £2,000 sterling, he would send me an acquittance. As this was sending him several hundreds out of my own pocket, I absolutely refused it ; and, in return, I have just received a threatening letter, to print I know not

what stuff against me. I am too well acquainted with the world (of which poor Mrs. Murray's affair is a fatal instance), not to know that the most groundless accusation is always of ill consequence to a woman; besides the cruel misfortune it may bring upon me in my own family. If you have any compassion either for me or my innocent children, I am sure you will try to prevent it. The thing is too serious to be delayed. I think (to say nothing either of blood or affection), that humanity and Christianity are interested in my preservation. I am sure I can answer for my hearty gratitude and everlasting acknowledgment of a service much more important than that of saving my life."

In Lady Mary's correspondence there is no further reference to this sorry business, and so it cannot be said how it ended Nor can it be decided whether Rémond really believed he had been swindled or whether he was just a blackmailer.

The intimacy between Lady Mary and Pope is especially interesting because it culminated in one of the most famous quarrels in the literary annals of this country, and second only to that between Pope and Addison.

When Lady Mary went abroad in 1716 Pope, who always wanted to make the best of both worlds, thought, it has been related by his biographers, of what dramatic situation describing the separation of lovers would best suit him to express his feelings, and he found exactly what he wanted on the supposed authentic letters of Eloisa to Abelard. Pope sent Lady Mary a volume of his poems, saying: "Among the rest you have all I am worth, that is, my works. There are few things in them but what you have already seen, except the 'Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard,' in which you will find one passage that I cannot tell whether to wish you should understand or not."

Pope corresponded with Lady Mary during the two years of her stay abroad. The first letter from Pope begins:

" So natural as I find it is to me to neglect every body else in your company, I am sensible I ought to do anything that might please you, and I fancied upon recollection, our writing the letter you proposed was of that nature. I therefore sate down to my part of it last night, when I should have gone out of town. Whether or no you will order me, in recompense, to see you again, I leave to you, for indeed I find I begin to behave myself worse to you than to any other woman, as I value you more, and yet if I thought I should not see you again, I would say some things here, which I could not to your person. For I would not have you die deceived in me, that is, go to Constantinople without knowing that I am to some degree of extravagance, as well as with the utmost reason, madam, your, etc."

Some passages from Pope's subsequent letters must be given to indicate the lines on which this correspondence was conducted.

" You may easily imagine how desirous I must be of correspondence with a person who had taught me long ago, that it was as possible to esteem at first sight, as to love ; and who has since ruined me for all the conversation of one sex and almost all the friendship of the other. I am but too sensible, through your means, that the company of men, wants a certain softness to recommend it, and that of women wants everything else. How often have I been quietly going to take possession of that tranquility and indolence I had so long found in the country, when one evening of your conversation has spoiled me for a solitaire too ! Books have lost their effect upon me, and I was convinced since I saw you, that there is something more powerful than philosophy, and since I heard you, that there is one alive wiser than all the sages. A plague of female wisdom ! it makes a man ten times more uneasy than his own. What is very strange, Virtue herself, when you have the dressing of her, is too amiable for one's repose. What a world of good might you have done in your time, if you had allowed half the fine gentlemen who have seen you to have but conversed with you !

They would have been strangely caught, while they thought only to fall in love with a fair face, and you had bewitched them with reason and virtue, two beauties that the very fops pretend to have an acquaintance with."

"August 20, 1716.

"MADAM,

"You will find me more troublesome than ever Brutus did his evil genius, I shall meet you in more places than one, and often refreshen your memory before you arrive at your Philippi. These shadows of me (my letters) will be haunting you from time to time, and putting you in mind of the man who has really suffered by you, and whom you have robbed of the most valuable of his enjoyments, your conversation. The advantage of learning your sentiments by discovering mine, was what I always thought a great one, and even with the risk I run of manifesting my own indiscretion. You then rewarded my trust in you the moment it was given, for you pleased and informed me the minute you answered. I must now be contented with slow returns. However, it is some pleasure, that your thoughts upon paper will be a more lasting possession to me, and that I shall no longer have cause to complain of a loss I have so often regretted, that of anything you said, which I happened to forget. In earnest, Madam, if I were to write you as often as I think of you, it must be every day of my life. I attend you in spirit through all your ways, I follow in books of travel through every stage, I wish for you, fear for you through whole folios, you make me shrink at the past dangers of dead travellers, and when I read an agreeable prospect or delightful place, I hope it yet subsists to give you pleasure. I inquire the roads, the amusements, the company of every town and country you pass through, with as much diligence, as if I were to set out next week to overtake you. In a word no one can have you more constantly in mind, not even your guardian-angel (if you have one), and I am willing to indulge so much Popery as to fancy some Being takes care of you who knows your value

better than you do yourself. I am willing to think that Heaven never gave so much self-neglect and resolution to a woman, to occasion her calamity, but am pious enough to believe those qualities must be intended to her benefit and her glory."

Pope's letters of this period to Lady Mary were all written in a strain of adulation, which may well have pleased Lady Mary and must certainly have amused her. She can, however, scarcely have been led into any self-deception as regards the sincerity of her correspondent, in spite of the fact that in one of the earliest epistles he addressed to her he subscribed himself : " I am, with all unalterable esteem and sincerity, Madam, your most faithful, obedient, humble servant." Yet, no doubt, she was pleased enough to read : " I communicated your letter to Mr. Congreve ; he thinks of you as he ought, I mean as I do, for one always thinks that to be just as it ought . . . We never meet but we lament over you : we pay a kind of weekly rites to your memory, when we strew flowers of rhetoric and offer such libations to your name as if it were a profaneness to call toasting." Well, alcoholic refreshment by any other name is just as potent. It must have been grateful and comforting to be told when in exile : " I must tell you, too, that the Duke of Buckingham has been more than once your high priest in performing the office of your praises : and upon the whole I believe there are few men who do not deplore your departure, as women that sincerely do."

Most excellent Pope, who would play at make-believe. It is almost a pity that he could not persuade the lady that he meant even a tithe of what he wrote to her. Listen to him again : " For my part, I hate a great many women for your sake, and undervalue all the rest. 'Tis you who are to blame, and may God revenge it upon you, with all those blessings and earthy prosperities which the divines tell us, are the cause of our perdition : for if He makes you happy in this world, I dare trust your own virtue to do it in the other." These poets !

Lady Mary took all this in the right way, and as love-letters

ALEXANDER POPE.

After the Portrait by William Hoare.

p. 164.

appraised them at their true value. " Perhaps you'll laugh at me for thanking you very gravely for all the obliging concern you express for me," she wrote from Vienna in September, with, perhaps, just a touch of irony. " 'Tis certain that I may, if I please, take the fine things you say to me for wit and raillery; and it may be, it would be taking them right. But I never in my life was half so well disposed to believe you in earnest; and that distance which makes the continuation of your friendship improbable, has very much increased my faith for it, and I find that I have (as well as the rest of my sex), whatever face I set on't, a strong disposition to believe in miracles." As regards the rest, her side of the correspondence was matter-of-fact to such a degree that it suggests that she adopted that tone in order to lease him. Her replies can scarcely have given Pope any satisfaction. From Vienna she gave him a detailed account of the opera and the theatre; from Belgrade she told him of the war and of an Arabic scholar and also of the climate; from Adrianople she discoursed of the Hebrus, of the lads of the village, of Addison and Theocritus, pays him compliments on his translation of Homer, and a copy of some Turkish verses; and so on. The most striking thing about her letters is the absence of the personal note, which is so often introduced when she was writing to others. They read more like essays than communications to a friend.

Pope, in a letter dated September 1, 1718, sent Lady Mary a copy of his verses.

ON JOHN HUGHES AND SARAH DREW

When Eastern lovers fear'd the fun'eral fire
On the same pile the faithful pair expire!
Here pitying Heav'n that virtue mutual found,
And blasted both, that it might neither wound.
Hearts so sincere th' Almighty saw well pleas'd,
Sent his own lightning and the victims seiz'd.

I

Think not by vig'rous judgment seiz'd,
A pair so faithful could expire;
Victims so pure Heav'n saw well pleas'd,
And snatch'd them in celestial fire.

II

Live well, and fear no sudden fate:
When God calls virtue to the grave;
Alike 'tis justice, soon or late,
Mercy alike to kill or save.
Virtue unmov'd can hear the call,
And face the flash that melts the ball.

These verses she acknowledged in a letter which, written while on the homeward path, she sent from Dover, where she arrived at the beginning of November.

"I have this minute received a letter of yours, sent me from Paris. I believe and hope I shall very soon see both you and Mr. Congreve; but as I am here in an inn, where we stay to regulate our march to London, bag and baggage, I shall employ some of my leisure time in answering that part of yours that seems to require an answer.

"I must applaud your good nature, in supposing that your pastoral lovers (vulgarly called haymakers) would have lived in everlasting joy and harmony, if the lightning had not interrupted their scheme of happiness. I see no reason to imagine that John Hughes and Sarah Drew were either wiser or more virtuous than their neighbours. That a well-set man of twenty five should have a fancy to marry a brown woman of eighteen, is nothing marvellous; and I cannot help thinking, that, had they married, their lives would have passed in the common track with their fellow parishioners. His endeavouring to shield her from the storm, was a natural action, and what he would have certainly done for his horse, if he had been in the same situation. Neither am I of opinion, that their sudden death was a reward of their mutual virtue. You know the Jews were reproved for thinking a village destroyed by fire more wicked than those that had escaped the thunder. Time and chance happen to all men. Since you desire me to try my skill in an epitaph, I think the following lines perhaps more just, though not so poetical as yours:

Here lies John Hughes and Sarah Drew ;
Perhaps you'll say, what's that to you ?
Believe me, friend, much may be said
On this poor couple that are dead.
On Sunday next they should have married ;
But see how oddly things are carried !
On Thursday last it rain'd and lighten'd ;
These tender lovers, sadly frighten'd,
Shelter'd beneath the cocking hay,
In hopes to pass the storm away ;
But the bold thunder found them out
(Commissioned for that end, no doubt),
And, seizing on their trembling breath,
Consign'd them to the shades of death.
Who knows if 'twas not kindly done ?
For had they seen the next year's sun,
A beaten wife and cuckold swain
Had jointly curs'd the marriage chain ;
Now they are happy in their doom,
For P. has wrote upon their tomb.

" I confess, these sentiments are not altogether so heroic as yours ; but I hope you will forgive them in favour of the two last lines. You see how much I esteem the honour you have done them ; though I am not very impatient to have the same, and had rather continue to be your stupid living humble servant, than be celebrated by all the pens in Europe.

" I would write to Mr. Congreve, but suppose you will read this to him, if he enquires after me."

CHAPTER XI

AT TWICKENHAM

The Montagus take a house at Twickenham—Lady Mary's liking for country life—Neighbours and visitors—Pope—Bononcini, Anastasia Robinson, Senesino—Lord Peterborough—Sir Geoffrey Kneller—Henrietta Howard—Lord Bathurst—The Duke of Wharton—His early history—He comes to Twickenham—His relations with Lady Mary—Horace Walpole's reference to them—Pope's bitter onslaught on the Duke—An Epilogue by Lady Mary—"On the death of Mrs. Bowes"—The Duke quarrels with Lady Mary.

POPE went to live at Twickenham in 1718, and it was generally believed that it was by his persuasion that the Montagus rented a house in that little riverside hamlet. It was not until 1722 that they bought "the small habitation."

Lady Mary divided her time between London and Twickenham, but apparently enjoyed herself more at her country retreat. "I live in a sort of solitude that wants very little of being such as I would have it," she wrote to her sister, Lady Mar, in August, 1721. As a matter of fact, the solitude was more imaginary than real, for round about there was a small colony of friends.

She was, indeed, very rarely lonely. "My time is melted away in almost perpetual concerts," she told her sister. "I do not presume to judge, but I'll assure you I am a very hearty as well as an humble admirer. I have taken my little thread satin beauty into the house with me; she is allowed by Bononcini to have the finest voice he ever heard in England. He and Mrs. Robinson and Senesino lodge in this village, and sup often with me: and this easy indolent life would make me the happiest

thing in the world, if I had not this execrable affair [of Rémond] still hanging over my head." To Anastasia Robinson there is more than one allusion in Lady Mary's correspondence, and she gives a most amusing account of an incident in that lady's career.

"Could one believe that Lady Holdernesse is a beauty, and in love? and that Mrs. Robinson is at the same time a prude and a kept mistress? and these things in spite of nature and fortune. The first of these ladies is tenderly attached to the polite Mr. Mildmay, and sunk in all the joys of happy love, notwithstanding she wants the use of her two hands by a rheumatism, and he has an arm that he cannot move. I wish I could send you the particulars of this amour, which seems to me as curious as that between two oysters; and as well worth the serious enquiry of the naturalists. The second heroine has engaged half the town in arms, from the nicety of her virtue, which was not able to bear the too near approach of Senesino in the opera; and her condescension in accepting of Lord Peterborough for her champion, who has signalised both his love and courage upon this occasion in as many instances as ever Don Quixote did for Dulcinea. Poor Senesino, like a vanquished giant, was forced to confess upon his knees that Anastasia was a nonpariel of virtue and beauty. Lord Stanhope, as dwarf to the said giant, joked of his side, and was challenged for his pains. Lord Delawar was Lord Peterborough's second; my lady miscarried—the whole town divided into parties on this important point. Innumerable have been the disorders between the two sexes on so great an account, besides half the house of peers being put under arrest. By the providence of Heaven, and the wise cares of his Majesty, no bloodshed ensued. However, things are now tolerably accommodated; and the fair lady rides through the town in triumph, in the shining berlin of her hero, not to reckon the essential advantage of £100 a month, which 'tis said he allows her."

This story is, as a matter of fact, not far removed from the truth. It omits, however, the fact that Lord Peterborough, then about sixty years of age, had married Anastasia Robinson in 1722; but the marriage was secret, although Lady Oxford was present at the ceremony, and it was not made public until thirteen years later, although long before there were many who suspected it. He died in the same year that the announcement was made. His widow survived him by a score of years.

Sir Godfrey Kneller had a house at Twickenham, and, at the instigation of Pope, sat to him for her portrait, upon which the following lines (generally ascribed to Pope) were written:

"The playful smiles around the dimpled mouth,
That happy air of majesty and truth;
So would I draw (but oh! 'tis vain to try,
My narrow genius does the power deny;)
The equal lustre of the heav'nly mind,
Where ev'ry grace with every virtue's join'd;
Learning not vain, and wisdom not severe,
With greatness easy, and with wit sincere;
With just description show the work divine,
And the whole princess in my work should shine."

Mrs. Howard, afterwards the Countess of Suffolk, was a neighbour from 1723, when the Prince of Wales, whose mistress she was, provided her with funds for the purchase of Marble Hill. However, though, of course, she and Lady Mary were acquainted, there was at no time any intimacy between them. Lady Mary, in fact, does not appear to have liked Henrietta Howard. At least she on more than one occasion tittle-tattled about her. "The most surprising news is Lord Bathurst's assiduous court to their Royal Highnesses, which fills the coffee-houses with profound speculations. But I, who smell a rat at a profound distance, do believe in private that Mrs. Howard and his lordship have a friendship that borders upon 'the tender.'

"And though in histories, learned ignorance
Attributes all to cunning or to chance,
Love in that grave disguise does often smile,
Knowing the cause was kindness all the while."

So Lady Mary wrote to Lady Mar in 1724, and shortly after returned to the subject in another epistle: "You may remember I mentioned in my last some suspicions of my own in relation to Lord Bathurst, which I really never mentioned, for fifty reasons, to anyone whatsoever; but, as there is never smoke without some fire, there is very rarely fire without some smoke. These smothered flames, though admirably covered with whole heaps of politics laid over them, were at last seen, felt, heard, and understood; and the fair lady given to understand by her commanding officer, that if she showed under other colours, she must expect to have her pay retrenched. Upon which the good Lord was dismissed, and has not attended the drawing-room since. You know one cannot help laughing, when one sees him next, and I own I long for that pleasurable moment."

To Twickenham came Philip, Duke of Wharton, and leased a villa, later called The Grove, at the farther end of the hamlet from London. Of all the lads of the village there was none for wildness like unto him. Born in 1698, and therefore nine years younger than Lady Mary, he had at an early age made himself conspicuous by unbridled excesses. Soon after the death of his father, Thomas, first Marquess of Wharton, in 1715, his conduct created so much scandal at home, that his guardians sent him abroad in the custody of a tutor. To the horror of that unfortunate person, his charge enrolled himself as an adherent of the Pretender, and went to pay his respects at Avignon. The Duke had talent beyond the ordinary. He could write fairly well, make an excellent speech, and had a keen sense of wit. When he went to Paris, the British Ambassador, Lord Stair, took it upon himself to give this madcap some sound advice. He extolled the virtues of the late Marquess of Wharton, and, "I hope," he said, "you will follow so illustrious an example of fidelity to your Prince and love to your country." "I thank your Excellency for your good counsel," replied the visitor courteously, "and as your Excellency had also a worthy and discerning father, I hope that

you will likewise copy so bright an example, and tread in all his footsteps,"—an effective though a brutal rejoinder, for the first Lord Stair had betrayed his Sovereign. Young Wharton, on his return, however, showed by his conduct that his visit to Avignon had been little more than a prank, for while he had accepted a dukedom from the Pretender, he, in 1718, being still a minor, accepted a dukedom from the British Sovereign—the single instance of such a dignity being conferred upon a minor.

Wharton, who did everything in haste, had in his seventeenth year eloped with Martha, daughter of Major-General Richard Holmes, and married her in the Fleet on March 2, 1715. As was only to be expected from a person so volatile he from the beginning neglected his wife; but, as is put quaintly in that unreliable work, *Memoirs of a Certain Island adjacent to the Kingdom of Utopia*, which was concocted by Mrs. Eliza Haywood, "after some years of continu'd extravagance, the Duke, either through the natural Inconsistency of his Temper, or the Reflection how much he had been drawn in by his unworthy Companions to embezel his Estate . . . began to think there were Comforts in Retirement; and falling into the Conversation of the sober part of Mankind, more than he had done, was persuaded by them to take home his Dutchess. . . . He brought her to his House; but Love had no part in his Resolution. He lived with her indeed but she is with him as a Housekeeper, as a Nurse." The relations were, however, more intimate than Mrs. Haywood believed, for in March, 1719, a son was born to them.

"The Duke of Wharton has brought his Duchess to town, and is fond of her to distraction; in order to break the hearts of all other women that have any claim on him," Lady Mary wrote to Lady Mar. "He has public devotions twice a day, and assists at them in person with exemplary devotion; and there is nothing pleasanter than the remarks of some pious ladies on the conversion of such a sinner."

The letter from which the above passage is an extract must have been written not later than the early spring of 1720, for

after that date the Duke and Duchess of Wharton did not again live together. The immediate cause of the separation was that Wharton had forbidden his wife to come to London where small-pox was raging at the time. She, however, whether irked by the dulness of the country, or thinking by her presence to guard her husband against those temptations to which he was prone, followed him to the town, where the infant sickened of the epidemic and died. After one great scene, they never met again.

There is mention of the Duke in another letter of Lady Mary to Lady Mar, dated February, 1724 :

" In general, gallantry never was in so elevated a figure as it is at present. Twenty very pretty fellows (the Duke of Wharton being president and chief director) have formed themselves into a committee of gallantry. They call themselves *Schemers ;* and meet regularly three times a week, to consult on gallant schemes for the advantage and advancement of that branch of happiness. . . . I consider the duty of a true Englishwoman is to do what honour she can to her native country ; and that it would be a sin against the pious love I bear the land of my nativity, to confine the renown due to the Schemers within the small extent of this little island, which ought to be spread wherever men can sigh, or women wish. 'Tis true they have the envy and curses of the old and ugly of both sexes, and a general persecution from all old women ; but this is no more than all reformations must expect in their beginning."

More than one writer has asserted that it was the wit and beauty of Lady Mary that drew him thither. At the time the Duke was twenty-four and the lady nine years older. Certainly he paid her marked attention, but as he paid marked attention to all women who had not a hump or a squint—sometimes, maybe, he even overlooked the squint—it is as impossible to say whether he was in love with her as it is to assert that she was in love with him. From the little that is known of their intimacy, it would

seem that they were merely good comrades—good comrades of the type that might bite or scratch at any moment. Horace Walpole, who was more than usually malicious where Lady Mary was concerned, could scarcely induce himself to allow her any qualities. "My Lady Stafford," * he wrote to George Montagu in 1751, "used to live at Twickenham when Lady Mary Wortley and the Duke of Wharton lived there; she had more wit than both of them. What would I give to have had Strawberry Hill twenty years ago! I think anything but twenty years. Lady Stafford used to say to her sister, 'Well, child, I have come without my wit to-day'; that is, she had not taken her opium, which she was forced to do if she had any appointment, to be in particular spirits."

Horace Walpole alluded to Lady Mary and the Duke in "The Parish Register of Twickenham":

> "Twickenham, where frolic Wharton revelled
> Where Montagu, with locks dishevelled,
> Conflict of dirt and warmth combin'd,
> Invoked—and scandalised the *Nine*."

What Pope thought of the Duke he expressed with the utmost vigour:

> "Wharton, the scorn and wonder of our days,
> Whose ruling passion was the lust of praise:
> Born with whate'er could win it from the wise,
> Women and fools must like him, or he dies:
> Though wondering senates hung on all he spoke,
> The club must hail him master of the joke.
> Shall parts so various aim at nothing new?
> He'll shine a Tully and a Wilmot too.
> Then turns repentant, and his God adores
> With the same spirit that he drinks and whores;
> Enough, if all around him but admire,
> And now the punk applaud, and now the friar.
> Thus with each gift of nature and of art,
> And wanting nothing but an honest heart;
> Grown all to all; from no one vice exempt,
> And most contemptible, to shun contempt:

* Claude Charlotte, Countess of Stafford, wife of Henry, Earl of Stafford, and daughter of Philibert, Count of Grammont, and Elizabeth Hamilton, his wife.

His passion still, to covet general praise,
His life, to forfeit it a thousand ways ;
A constant bounty which no friend has made ;
An angel tongue, which no man can persuade ;
A fool, with more of wit than half mankind ;
Too rash for thought, for action too refined :
A tyrant to his wife his heart approves ;
A rebel to the very king he loves ;
He dies, sad outcast of each church and state,
And, harder still ! flagitious, yet not great.
Ask you why Wharton broke through every rule ?
'Twas all for fear the knaves should call him fool."

The Duke wrote a play on Mary Queen of Scots—of which only four lines have been preserved :

" Sure were I free, and Norfolk were a prisoner,
I'd fly with more impatience to his arms,
Than the poor Israelite gaz'd on the serpent,
When life was the reward of every look."

It is usually stated that this play was written at some time between 1728 and 1730, but it is certain that it was begun at this time—probably it was never finished. Perhaps only the scenario was drawn up, and a few scenes outlined ; but that so much at least was done while the author was at Twickenham is proved conclusively by the fact that at this time Lady Mary composed for the play an epilogue, designed to be spoken by Mrs. Oldfield.

" What could luxurious woman wish for more,
To fix her joys, or to extend her pow'r ?
Their every wish was in this Mary seen,
Gay, witty, youthful, beauteous, and a queen.
Vain useless blessings with ill-conduct join'd !
Light as the air, and fleeting as the wind.
Whatever poets write, and lovers vow,
Beauty, what poor omnipotence hast thou ?
Queen Bess had wisdom, council, power and laws ;
How few espous'd a wretched beauty's cause ?
Learn thence, ye fair, more solid charms to prize,
Contemn the idle flatt'rers of your eyes.
The brightest object shines but while 'tis new,
That influence lessens by familiar view.
Monarchs and beauties rule with equal sway,
All strive to serve, and glory to obey,
Alike unpitied when depos'd they grow—
Men mock the idol of their former vow.
Two great examples have been shown to-day,

To what sure ruin passion does betray,
What long repentance to short joys is due,
When reason rules, what glory must ensue.
If you will love, love like Eliza then,
Love for amusement, like those traitors, men.
Think that the pastime of a leisure hour
She favor'd oft—but never shar'd her pow'r.
The traveller by desert wolves pursued,
If by his heart the savage foe's subdu'd,
The world will still the noble act applaud,
Though victory was gain'd by needful fraud.
Such is, my tender sex, our helpless case,
And such the barbarous heart, hid by the begging face,
By passion fir'd, and not withheld by shame,
They cruel hunters are, we trembling game.
Trust me, dear ladies, (for I know 'em well),
They burn to triumph, and they sigh to tell:
Cruel to them that yield, cullies to them that sell.
Believe me, 'tis far the wiser course,
Superior art should meet superior force:
Hear, but be faithful to your int'rest still:
Secure your hearts—then fool with whom you will."

At Twickenham the Duke seems in some degree to have relied for his entertainment upon his pen. There he wrote his articles for the *True Briton*, and also indited various trifles in verse. Never neglecting an opportunity to indulge his humour, when Lady Mary Wortley Montagu wrote a poem on the untimely death of a friend, he could not refrain from presenting her with a parody.

ON THE DEATH OF MRS. BOWES

By Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

" Hail, happy bride! for thou art truly bless'd,
Three months of rapture crown'd with endless rest,
Merit like yours was Heav'n's peculiar care,
You lov'd—yet tasted happiness sincere:
To you the sweets of love were only shown,
The sure succeeding bitter dregs unknown.
You had not yet the fatal change deplor'd
The tender lover for th' imperious lord,
Nor felt the pains that jealous fondness brings,
Nor wept that coldness from possession springs,
Above your sex distinguish'd in your fate,
You trusted—yet experienc'd no deceit.
Soft were your hours, and wing'd with pleasure flew,
No vain repentance gave a sign to you,
And if superior bliss heav'n can bestow,
With fellow-angels you enjoy it now."

THE ANSWER

By the Duke of Wharton

" Hail, Poetess ! for thou art truly blest,
Of wit, of beauty, and of love possest,
Your muse does seem to bless poor Bowes's fate,
But far 'tis from you to desire her state,
In every line your wanton soul appears,
Your verse, tho' smooth, scarce fit for modest ears,
No pangs of jealous fondness doth thou shew,
And bitter dregs of love thou ne'er didst know :
The coldness that your husband oft has mourn'd,
Does vanish quite, when warm'd on Turkish ground.
For Fame does say, if Fame don't lying prove,
You paid obedience to the Sultan's love.
Who, fair one, then, was your imperious Lord ?
Not Montagu, but Mahomet the word :
Great as your wit, just so is Wortley's love,
Your next attempt will be on thund'ring Jove,
The little angels you on Bowes bestow,
But gods themselves are only fit for you."

No writer of verses likes to have fun poked at them, even in the form of friendly banter, but Lady Mary seems to have borne the affliction admirably.

Two persons with such impish humour could not but frequently find themselves at loggerheads, but their liking for each other's society was genuine, and quarrels were followed by peace-making. " Sophia [as she nicknamed the young man] and I have been quite reconciled, and are now quite broke, and I believe not likely to piece up again," Lady Mary wrote to her sister. This was in February, 1725, and a little later in the year the breach was widened by the really outrageous conduct of the Duke :

" Sophia and I have an immortal quarrel ; which though I resolve never to forgive, I can hardly forbear laughing at. An acquaintance of mine is married, whom I wish very well to : Sophia has been pleased, on this occasion, to write the most infamous ballad that ever was written ; where both the bride and bridegroom are intolerably mauled, especially the last, who is complimented with the hopes of cuckoldom, and forty other things equally obliging, and Sophia has distributed this

ballad in such a manner as to make it pass for mine, on purpose to pique the poor innocent soul of the new-married man, whom I should be the last of creatures to abuse. I know not how to clear myself of this vile imputation, without a train of consequences I have no mind to fall into. In the mean time, Sophia enjoys the pleasure of heartily plaguing both me and that person."

Probably this "immortal quarrel" would have been made up, but at the beginning of July the Duke went abroad never to return. "Sophia is going to Aix-la-Chapelle, and thence to Paris," Lady Mary wrote to Lady Mar. "I dare swear she'll endeavour to get acquainted with you. We are broke to an iremediable degree. Various are the persecutions I have endured from her this winter, in all of which I remain neuter, and shall certainly go to heaven from the passive meekness of my temper."

CHAPTER XII

A FAMOUS QUARREL

Pope and Lady Mary—He pays her compliments—His jealousy of her other admirers—The cause of his quarrel with her—His malicious attacks on her thereafter—Writes of her as "Sappho"—Lady Mary asks Arbuthnot to protect her—Molly Skerritt—Lady Stafford—Lady Mary's malicious tongue and pen—Mrs. Murray—"An Epistle from Arthur Grey"—Lady Mary, Lord Hervey, and Molly Lepell—Death of the Earl of Kingston—Lady Gower—Lady Mar—Marriage of Lady Mary's daughter.

Of Pope, it is curious to relate, though he was a near neighbour, she saw less and less. It has been suggested that the first rift in the lute was her parody of his verses about the lovers struck by lightning; but even he, most sensitive of men, can scarcely have been seriously offended. So far as is known, only two letters passed between them after 1719.

"I pass my time in a small snug set of dear intimates, and go very little into the *grand monde*, which has always had my hearty contempt" (she wrote to Lady Mar in the spring of 1722). "I see sometimes Mr. Congreve, and very seldom Mr. Pope, who continues to embellish his house at Twickenham. He has made a subterranean grotto, which he has furnished with looking-glass, and they tell me it has a very good effect. I here send you some verses addressed to Mr. Gay, who wrote him a congratulatory letter on the finishing his house. I stifled them here, and I beg they may die the same death at Paris, and never go further than your closet:

' Ah, friend, 'tis true—this truth you lovers know—
In vain my structures rise, my gardens grow,
In vain fair Thames reflects the double scenes
Of hanging mountains, and of sloping greens :
Joy lives not here ; to happier seats it flies,
And only dwells where Wortley casts her eyes.

What is the gay parterre, the chequer'd shade,
The morning bower, the ev'ning colonnade,
But soft recesses of uneasy minds,
To sigh unheard in, to the passing winds ?
So the struck deer in some sequestrate part
Lies down to die, the arrow at his heart ;
There, stretch'd unseen in coverts hid from day,
Bleeds drop by drop, and pants his life away.'

It may here be remarked that in Epistle VIII of the *Moral Essays* Pope had a line :

" And other beauties envy Wortley's eyes " ;

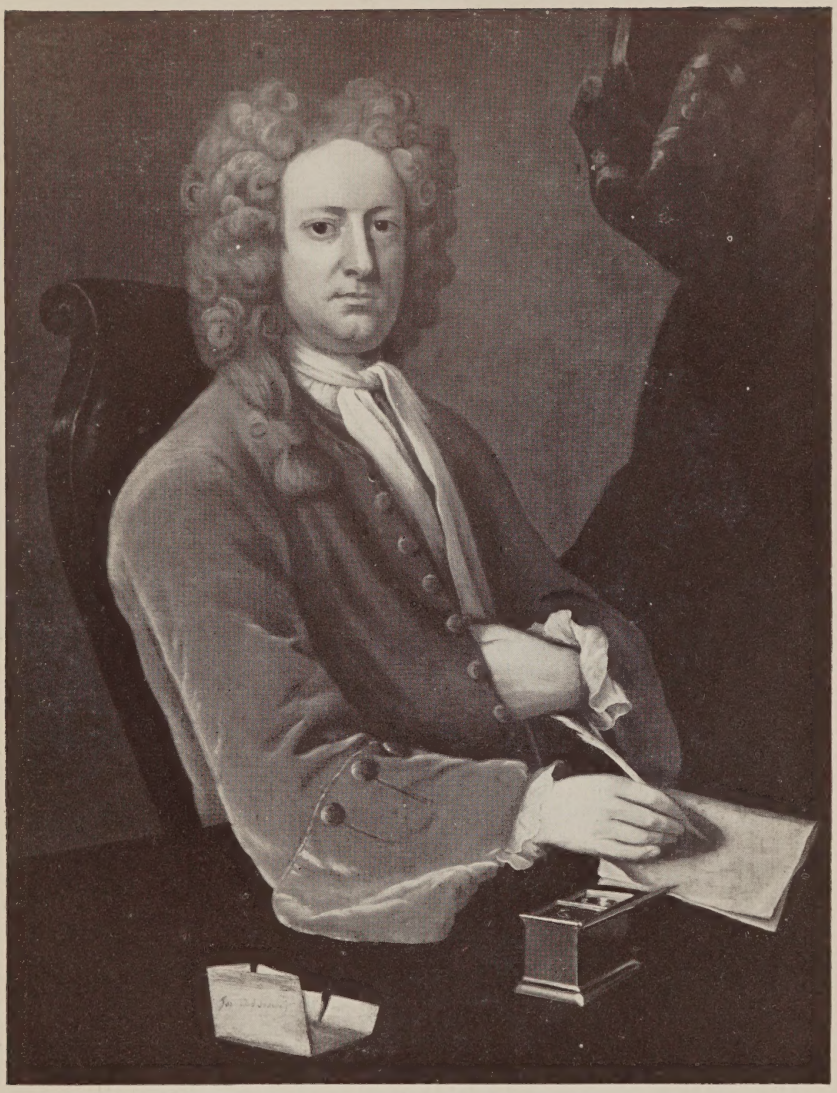
but in a reprint of the poem he substituted [Lady] " Worsley " for " Wortley " in order to give the impression that " Wortley " had been a misprint.

Pope's quarrel with Lady Mary began in or about 1722. The cause is obscure. Many reasons have been advanced. Lady Mary in her correspondence gives no clue as to the breach.

It has been said that it arose out of the fact that Pope lent the Montagus a pair of sheets and that they were returned unwashed, to the great indignation of his mother who lived with him. It is difficult to believe this.

Others have it that he was jealous of the favour which Lady Mary accorded to the Duke of Wharton and Lord Hervey. Certainly he lampooned the Duke, and he was never weary of writing insultingly about the other.

Most probable is the account given by Lady Louisa Stuart, Lady Mary's grand-daughter, which is to the effect that Pope made a declaration of love, and that Lady Mary received it with shrieks of laughter. If Pope were serious, it must have galled him indeed, though nothing can excuse the malignity with which he pursued her for years and years. And if he were not



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in earnest, he would probably have been nearly, if not quite, as indignant.

Anyhow, it is a sorry story, and a blot on the scutcheon of the poet, who, good-hearted as he usually was, was cursed by the gift, refined to a rare degree, of alienating his friends, more often than not for some fancied slight. Addison he lampooned, and from Dennis and Philips he parted company. "Leave him as soon as you can," Addison had warned Lady Mary. "He will certainly play you some devilish trick else: he has an appetite for satire." Lady Mary presently must have wished that she had followed this sage counsel.

When Pope fought, he fought with the gloves off; and not the sex or the age or the standing of the subject of his wrath deterred him a whit.

> "Have I, in silent wonder, seen such things
> As pride in slaves, and avarice in kings;
> And at a peer, or peeress, shall I fret,
> Who starves a sister, or forswears a debt?"

Thus Pope in the First Dialogue of the *Epilogue to the Satires*. The reference to forswearing a debt, is, of course, to the Rémond business; "who starves a sister" is an allusion to Lady Mary and Lady Mar.*

Pope returned to the attack again and again. In *The Satires of Dr. John Donne Versified*, he inserted the following lines, although there is nothing in the original to warrant the stroke at Lady Mary:

> "Yes, thank my stars! as early as I knew
> This town, I had the sense to hate it too:
> Yet here, as e'en in hell, there must be still
> One giant vice, so excellently ill.
> That all beside, one pities, not abhors:
> As who knows Sappho, smiles at other whores."

Again, in the *Epistle to Martha Blount*:

> "As Sappho's diamonds with her dirty smock;
> Or Sappho at her toilet's greasy task,
> With Sappho radiant at an evening mask."

* *See* p. 200 of this work.

Pope would not admit that he alluded to Lady Mary as Sappho, but everyone realised that this was so. Lady Mary, much distressed, begged Lord Peterborough to urge Pope to refrain. The mission was undertaken reluctantly, and the result was scarcely satisfactory. "He said to me," Lord Peterborough wrote to Lady Mary, "what I had taken the liberty of saying to you, that he wondered how the town would apply these lines to any but some noted common woman; that he would yet be more surprised if you should take them to yourself; he named to me four remarkable poetesses and scribblers, Mrs. Centlivre, Mrs. Heywood, Mrs. Manley, and Mrs. Behn, assuring me that such only were the objects of his satire.

Much upset, Lady Mary wrote the following letter to Arbuthnot :

January 3 [1735].

"Sir,

"I have perused the last lampoon of your ingenious friend, and am not surprised you did not find me out under the name of Sappho, because there is nothing I ever heard in our characters or circumstances to make a parallel, but as the town (except you, who know better) generally suppose Pope means me, whenever he mentions that name, I cannot help taking notice of the horrible malice he bears against the lady signified by that name, which appears to be irritated by supposing her writer of the Verses to the Imitator of Horace. Now I can assure him they were wrote (without my knowledge) by a gentleman of great merit, whom I very much esteem, who he will never guess, and who, if he did know, he durst not attack; but I own the design was so well meant, and so excellently executed, that I cannot be sorry they were written. I wish you would advise poor Pope to turn to some more honest livelihood than libelling; I know he will allege in his excuse that he must write to eat, and he has now grown sensible that nobody will buy his verses except their curiosity is piqued to it, to see what is said of their acquaintance; but

I think this method of gain so exceeding vile that it admits of no excuse at all.—Can anything be more detestable than his abusing poor Moore, scarce cold in his grave, when it is plain he kept back his poem, while he lived, for fear he should beat him for it ? This is shocking to me, though of a man I never spoke to and hardly knew by sight ; but I am seriously concerned at the worse scandal he has heaped on Mr. Congreve, who was my friend, and whom I am obliged to justify, because I can do it on my own knowledge, and, which is yet farther, bring witness of it, from those who were then often with me, that he was so far from loving Pope's rhyme, both that—and his conversation were perpetual jokes to him, exceeding despicable in his opinion, and he has often made us laugh in talking of them, being particularly pleasant on that subject. As to Pope's being born of honest parents, I verily believe it, and will add one praise to his mother's character, that (though I only knew her very old) she always appeared to me to have much better sense than himself. I desire, sir, as a favour, that you would show this letter to Pope, and you will very much oblige, sir,

" Your humble servant."

Lady Mary was not a person, after severe chastisement, to turn the other cheek, and Pope was well aware of it. He believed that more than one social satire upon him came from her pen ; and he especially suspected her of having written, or anyhow of having had a hand in the composition of *A Pop upon Pope*, in which an account was given of a whipping in Ham Walk which was said to have been administered to him. The poet was so furious—he regarded it as an indirect attack on his physical deformity, of which he was always so conscious—that he actually inserted an announcement in the papers that no such incident had ever occurred—thereby drawing yet more attention to the lampoon. " You may be certain I shall never reply to such a libel as Lady Mary's," he wrote to Fortescue. " It is a pleasure and comfort at once to find out that with so much mind as so much malice must have to accuse or blacken

my character, it can fix upon no one ill or immoral thing in my life and must content itself to say, my poetry is dull and my person ugly."

Lady Mary, in a letter to Arbuthnot, denied the authorship of *A Pop upon Pope* :

" Sir,

" Since I saw you I have made some inquiries, and heard more, of the story you was so kind to mention to me. I am told Pope has had the surprising impudence to assert he can bring the lampoon when he pleases to produce it, under my own hand ; I desire he may be made to keep to this offer. If he is so skilful in counterfeiting hands, I suppose he will not confine that great talent to the gratifying his malice, but take some occasion to increase his fortune by the same method, and I may hope (by such practices) to see him exalted according to his merit, which nobody will rejoice at more than myself. I beg of you, sir (as an act of justice), to endeavour to set the truth in an open light, and then I leave to your judgment the character of those who have attempted to hurt mine in so barbarous a manner. I can assure you (in particular) you named a lady to me (as abused in this libel) whose name I never heard before, and as I never had any acquaintance with Dr. Swift am an utter stranger to all his affairs and even his person, which I never saw to my knowledge, and am now convinced the whole is a contrivance of Pope's to blast the reputation of one who never injured him. I am not more sensible of his injustice, than I am, sir, of your [*sic*] candour, generosity, and good sense I have found in you, which has obliged me to be with a very uncommon warmth your real friend, and I heartily wish for an opportunity of showing I am so more effectually than by subscribing myself your very

" Humble servant."

Whether, in spite of her denial, Lady Mary had a hand in *A Pop upon Pope* cannot be said ; but it is certainly safe

to believe that the following lines were written by her, in conjunction, the gossip of the day had it, with Lord Hervey, with some assistance from Mr. Wyndham, then tutor to the Duke of Cumberland :

"Verses addressed to the Imitator of the First Satire of the Second Book of Horace.

By a Lady

" Nor thou the justice of the world disown,
That leaves thee thus an outcast and alone :
For though in law the murder be to kill,
In equity the murder is the will.
Then while with coward hand you stab a name,
And try at least to assassinate our fame,
Like the first bold assassin be thy lot,
Ne'er be thy guilt forgiven or forgot ;
But as thou hat'st by hatred by mankind,
And with the emblem of thy crooked mind
Marked on thy back, like Cain, by God's own hand,
Wander like him accursed through the land."

It was this malignant attack upon his person that inspired Pope's lines in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* :

" Once, and but once, his heedless youth was bit,
And liked that dangerous thing, a female wit.
Safe, so he thought, though all the prudent chid ;
He writ no libels, but my lady did ;
Great odds, in amorous or poetic game,
Where woman's is the sin, and man's the shame."

With the following extract from a letter written by Lady Mary from Florence in 1740 this unpleasing incident may be dismissed :

" The word malignity, and a passage in your letter, call to my mind the wicked wasp of Twickenham : his lies affect me now no more ; they will be all as much despised as the story of the seraglio and the handkerchief, of which I am persuaded he was the only inventor. That man has a malignant and ungenerous heart ; and he is base enough to assume the mask of a moralist, in order to decry human nature, and to give a decent vent to his hatred of man and woman kind.—But I must quit

this contemptible subject, on which a just indignation would render my pen so fertile, that after having fatigued you with a long letter, I would surfeit you with a supplement twice as long."

At Twickenham Lady Mary interested herself in planning alterations in the house and gardens. "There is a sort of pleasure," she said, "in shewing one's own fancy on one's own ground." The longer she stayed at the riverside, the better she liked it. "I am at present at Twickenham," she wrote in July, 1723, "which is become so fashionable, and the neighbourhood so much enlarged, that 'tis more like Tunbridge or the Bath than a country retreat."

"I am now at the same distance from London that you are from Paris, and could fall into solitary amusements with a good deal of taste; but I resist it, as a temptation of Satan, and rather turn my endeavours to make the world as agreeable to me as I can, which is the true philosophy; that of despising it is of no use but to hasten wrinkles" (she wrote to Lady Mar in 1725). I ride a good deal, and have got a horse superior to any two-legged animal, he being without a fault. I work like an angel. I receive visits upon idle days, and I shade my life as I do my tent-stitch, that is, make as easy transitions as I can from business to pleasure; the one would be too flaring and gaudy without some dark shades of t'other; and if I worked altogether in the grave colours, you know 'twould be quite dismal. Miss Skerritt is in the house with me, and Lady Stafford has taken a lodging at Richmond: as their ages are different, and both agreeable in their kind, I laugh with the one, or reason with the other, as I happen to be in a gay or serious humour; and I manage my friends with such a strong yet with a gentle hand, that they are both willing to do whatever I have a mind to."

"Molly," that is, Maria Skerritt or Skirrett, is best known for her connection with Sir Robert Walpole. There was nothing

clandestine about the relationship: it was openly avowed. Miss Skerritt, who was the daughter of a London merchant, had great good looks and an ample fortune, and Walpole declared that she was indispensable to his happiness. She was received everywhere, and moved in fashionable society. It was to Lady Walpole and Molly Skerritt that Gay alluded in the song that he put in the mouth of Macheath (who was meant for Robert Walpole):

> " How happy could I be with either,
> Were t'other dear Charmer away ! "

Lady Walpole survived until the summer of 1738, and after her death the others married. The second Lady Walpole died of a miscarriage in June, 1739, to the great and enduring sorrow of her husband. For the surviving child, Walpole, when he accepted a peerage in 1742, secured the rank of an earl's daughter.

Lady Mary now spent her time between London and Twickenham. At Court, she was as popular as ever with the King; and she was liked in literary circles, and on good terms with Young, Arbuthnot, Garth, and the rest of the set. " I see every body but converse with nobody but *des amies choisses;* in the first rank of these are Lady Stafford and dear Molly Skerritt, both of whom have now the additional merit of being old acquaintances, and never having given me any reason to complain of either of 'em. I pass some days with the Duchess of Montagu, who might be a reigning beauty if she pleased. I see the whole town every Sunday, and select a few that I retain to supper. In short, if life could be always what it is, I believe I have so much humility in my temper I could be contented without anything better than this two or three hundred years but, alas !

> ' Dulness, and wrinkles, and disease, must come,
> And age, and death's irrevocable doom.' "

Lady Mary, who had some two-score years still to live, began at this time to deplore her increasing age. " For my own

part," she wrote to Lady Mar, " I have some coteries where wit and pleasure reign, and I should not fail to amuse myself tolerably enough, but for the d——d d——d quality of growing older every day, and my present joys are made imperfect by fears of the future." However, this depression was not always on her, and later she was writing :

" I think this is the first time in my life that a letter of yours has lain by me two posts unanswered. You'll wonder to hear that short silence is occasioned by not having a moment unemployed at Twickenham ; but I pass many hours on horseback, and, I'll assure you, ride stag-hunting, which I know you'll stare to hear of. I have arrived to vast courage and skill that way, and am as well pleased with it as with the acquisition of a new sense : his Royal Highness [the Prince of Wales] hunts in Richmond Park, and I make one of the *beau monde* in his train. I desire you after this account not to name the word old woman to me any more : I approach to fifteen nearer than I did ten years ago, and am in hopes to improve every year in health and vivacity."

Lady Mary's tongue made her many enemies in society, and when her tongue failed her she brought her pen into action. Her love of scandal must have gone far to make her unpopular, and if her letters to her sister at Paris had been published she would have found herself with scarcely a friend in the world.

Correspondence between Lady Mary, from London or Twickenham, to her sister, the Countess of Mar, at Paris, was a very one-sided affair. This was, in part, owing to the fact that Lord Mar was, of course, suspect, and that letters to him or to members of his family and household were (in all probability) intercepted in this country. Lady Mary, who had suspected this more than once, became more and more convinced that her suspicions were justified. " I have writ to you at least five-and-forty letters, dear sister, without receiving any answer, and

resolved not to confide in post-house fidelity any more, being firmly persuaded that they never came to your hands, or you would not refuse one line to let me know how you do, which is and ever will be of great importance to me." That was written at Christmas, 1722, and though in the meantime Lady Mary heard from her sister, she realised that if she wanted her letters to arrive she must be careful as to the topics upon which she discoursed. " Letters are so surely opened, I dare say nothing to you either of our intrigues or duels, both of which would afford great matter of mirth and speculation." The difficulties of communication did not decrease. " I have writ to you twice since I received yours in answer to that I sent by Mr. de Caylus," she remarked a little later ; " but I believe none of what I send by the post ever come to your hands, nor ever will while they are directed to Mr. Waters, for reasons that you may easily guess. I wish you would give me a safer direction ; it is very seldom I can have the opportunity of a private messenger, and it is very often that I have a mind to write to my dear sister."

Lady Mary, of course, often stayed in London, and in her correspondence are many references to her friends and her doings.

" Operas flourish more than ever, and I have been in a tract of going every time," she wrote to her sister in April, 1723. " The people I live most with are none of your acquaintance ; the Duchess of Montagu excepted, whom I continue to see often. Her daughter Belle is at this instant in the paradisal state of receiving visits every day from a passionate lover, who is her first love ; whom she thinks the finest gentleman in Europe, and is, besides that, Duke of Manchester. Her mamma and I often laugh and sigh reflecting on her felicity, the consummation of which will be in a fortnight. In the mean time they are permitted to be alone together every day and all the day."

In Lady Mary's very best vein is the following letter, written about the same time, and also addressed to her sister :

" I am yet in this wicked town, but purpose to leave it as soon as the Parliament rises. Mrs. Murray and all her satellites have so seldom fallen in my way, I can say little about them. Your old friend Mrs. Lowther is still fair and young, and in pale pink every night in the Parks ; but, after being highly in favour, poor I am in utter disgrace, without my being able to guess wherefore, except she fancied me the author or abettor of two vile ballads written on her dying adventure, which I am so innocent of that I never saw [them]. *A propos* of ballads, a most delightful one is said or sung in most houses about our dear beloved plot, which has been laid firstly to Pope, and secondly to me, when God knows we have neither of us wit enough to make it. Mrs. Hervey lies-in of a female child. Lady Rich is happy in dear Sir Robert's absence, and the polite Mr. Holt's return to his allegiance, who, though in a treaty of marriage with one of the prettiest girls in town (Lady Jane Wharton), appears better with her than ever. Lady Betty Manners is on the brink of matrimony with a Yorkshire Mr. Monckton of £3,000 per annum : it is a match of the young duchess's making, and she thinks matter of great triumph over the two coquette beauties, who can get nobody to have and to hold ; they are decayed to a piteous degree and so neglected that they are grown constant and particular to the two ugliest fellows in London. Mrs. Pulteney condescends to be publicly kept by the noble Earl of Cadogan ; whether Mr. Pulteney has a pad nag deducted out of the profits for his share I cannot tell, but he appears very well satisfied with it. This is, I think, the whole state of love ; as to that of wit, it splits itself into ten thousand branches ; poets increase and multiply to that stupendous degree, you see them at every turn, even in embroidered coats and pink-coloured top-knots ; making verses is almost as common as taking snuff, and God can tell what miserable stuff people carry about in their pockets, and offer to

all their acquaintances, and you know one cannot refuse reading and taking a pinch. This is a very great grievance, and so particularly shocking to me, that I think our wise lawgivers should take it into consideration, and appoint a fast-day to beseech Heaven to put a stop to this epidemical disease, as they did last year for the plague with great success."

Another typical letter from Lady Mary contains a story of the class that strongly appealed to her :

" The most diverting story about town at present is in relation to Edgcombe ; though your not knowing the people concerned so well as I do, will, I fear hinder you from being so much entertained by it. I can't tell whether you know a tall, musical, silly, ugly thing, niece to Lady Essex Roberts, who is called Miss Leigh. She went a few days ago to visit Mrs. Betty Tichborne, Lady Sunderland's sister, who lives in the house with her, and was denied at the door ; but, with the true manners of a great fool, told the porter that if his lady was at home she was very positive she would be very glad to see her. Upon which she was shewed up stairs to Miss Tichborne, who was ready to drop down at the sight of her, and could not help asking her in a grave way how she got in, being denied to every mortal, intending to pass the evening in devout preparation. Miss Leigh said she had sent away her chair and servants, with intent of staying till nine o'clock. There was then no remedy, and she was asked to sit down ; but had not been there a quarter of an hour when she heard a violent rap at the door, and somebody vehemently run up stairs. Miss Tichborne seemed much surprised, and said she believed it was Mr. Edgcombe, and was quite amazed how he took it into his head to visit her. During these excuses enter Edgcombe, who appeared frighted at the sight of a third person. Miss Tichborne told him almost at his entrance that the lady he saw there was perfect mistress of music, and as he passionately loved it, she thought she could not oblige him more than by

desiring her to play. Miss Leigh very willingly sat to the harpsichord ; upon which her audience decamped to the adjoining room, and left her to play over three or four lessons to herself. They returned, and made what excuses they could, but said very frankly they had not heard her performance, and begged her to begin again ; which she complied with, and gave them the opportunity of a second retirement. Miss Leigh was by this time all fire and flame to see her heavenly harmony thus slighted ; and when they returned, told them she did not understand playing to an empty room. Mr. Edgcombe begged ten thousand pardons, and said, if she would play *Godi*, it was a tune he died to hear, and it would be an obligation he should never forget. She made answer she would do him a much greater favour by her absence, which she supposed was all that was necessary at that time ; and ran down stairs in a great fury to publish as fast as she could ; and was so indefatigable in this pious design, that in four-and-twenty hours all the people in town had heard the story. My Lady Sunderland could not avoid hearing this story, and three days after, invited Miss Leigh to dinner, where, in the presence of her sister and all the servants, she told her she was very sorry she had been so rudely treated in her house ; that it was very true Mr. Edgcombe had been a perpetual companion of her sister's these two years, and she thought it high time he should explain himself, and she expected her sister should act in this matter as discreetly as Lady K. [Katherine] Pelham had done in the like case ; who had given Mr. Pelham four months to resolve in, and after that he was either to marry her or to lose her for ever. Sir Robert Sutton interrupted her by saying, that he never doubted the honour of Mr. Edgcombe, and was persuaded he could have no ill design in his family. The affair stands thus, and Mr. Edgcombe has four months to provide himself elsewhere ; during which time he has free egress and regress ; and 'tis seriously the opinion of many that a wedding will in good earnest be brought about by this admirable conduct.

" I send you a novel instead of a letter, but, as it is in your

power to shorten it when you please, by reading no farther than you like, I will make no excuses for the length of it."

Lady Mary had contracted an intimacy with Griselda Baillie, the wife of Mr. (afterwards Sir A.) Murray, of Stanhope, after her return from abroad, and there is frequent mention of her in the correspondence ; but the friendship came to an abrupt end in 1725.

" Among the rest a very odd whim has entered the little head of Mrs. Murray : do you know she won't visit me this winter ? " Lady Mary wrote to Lady Mar. " I, according to the usual integrity of my heart, and simplicity of my manners, with great *naïveté* desired to explain with her on the subject, and she answered that she was convinced that I had made the ballad upon her, and was resolved never to speak to me again. I answered (which was true), that I utterly defied her to have any one single proof of my making it, without being able to get any thing from her, but repetitions that she knew it. I cannot suppose that any thing you have said should occasion this rupture, and the reputation of a quarrel is always so ridiculous on both sides, that you will oblige me in mentioning it to her, for 'tis now at that pretty pass, she won't curtsey to me whenever she mets me, which is superlatively silly (if she really knew it), after a suspension of resentment for two years together."

Mrs. Murray had had an unpleasant adventure with her footman, Arthur Grey, who had broken into her bedroom. Lady Mary had written and circulated *An Epistle from Arthur Grey*, and later another, and an improper, ballad had appeared under the title of *Virtue in Danger*. Mrs. Murray was firmly convinced that both pieces came from the same pen.

Lady Mar, on receipt of the above letter, proposed to act as peacemaker. " I give you thanks for the good offices you promise with regard to Mrs. Murray," Lady Mary wrote to her in reply, " and I shall think myself sincerely obliged to you, as

I already am on many accounts. 'Tis very disagreeable in her to go about behaving and talking as she does, and very silly into the bargain."

" Mrs. Murray is in open war with me in such a manner as makes her very ridiculous without doing me much harm; my moderation having a very bright pretence of shewing itself " (she wrote to Lady Mar). " Firstly, she was pleased to attack me in very Billingsgate at a masquerade, where she was as visible as ever she was in her own clothes. I had the temper not only to keep silence myself, but enjoined it to the person with me; who would have been very glad to have shewn his great skill in sousing upon that occasion. She endeavoured to sweeten him by very exorbitant praises of his person, which might even have been mistaken for making love from a woman of less celebrated virtue; and concluded her oration with pious warnings to him, to avoid the conversation of one so unworthy his regard as myself, who to her certain knowledge loved another man. This last article, I own, piqued me more than all her preceding civilities. The gentleman she addressed herself to had a very slight acquaintance with me, and might possibly go away in the opinion that she had been confidante in some very notorious affair of mine. However, I made her no answer at the time, but you may imagine I laid up these things in my heart; and the first assembly I had the honour to meet her at, with a meek tone of voice, asked her how I had deserved so much abuse at her hands, which I assured her I would never return. She denied it in the spirit of lying; and in the spirit of folly owned it at length. I contented myself with telling her she was very ill advised, and thus we parted. But two days ago, when Sir Geoffrey Kneller's pictures were to be sold, she went to my sister Gower, and very civily asked if she intended to bid for your picture; assuring her that, if she did, she would not offer at purchasing it. You know crimp and quadrille incapacitate that poor soul from ever buying any thing; but she told me this circumstance; and I expected the

same civility from Mrs. Murray, having no way provoked her to the contrary. But she not only came to the auction, but with all possible spite bid up the picture, though I told her that, if you pleased to have it, I would gladly part with it to you, though to no other person. This had no effect upon her, nor her malice any more on me than the loss of ten guineas extraordinary, which I paid upon her account. The picture is in my possession, and at your service if you please to have it. She went to the masquerade a few nights afterwards, and had the good sense to tell people there that she was very unhappy in not meeting me, being come there on purpose to abuse me. What profit or pleasure she has in these ways I cannot find out. This I know, that revenge has so few joys for me, I shall never lose so much time as to undertake it."

So early as 1721, Lady Mary, writing to Lady Mar, mentions that " the most considerable incident that has happened a good while, was the ardent affection that Mrs. Hervey and her dear spouse * took to me. They visited me twice or thrice a day, and were perpetually cooing in my rooms. I was complaisant a great while ; but (as you know) my talent has never lain much that way. I grew at last so weary of those birds of paradise, I fled to Twickenham, as much to avoid their persecutions as for my own health, which is still in a declining way." Lady Mary did not like Lady Hervey, the beautiful " Molly " Lepell, whom Gay eulogised :

" Hervey, would you know the passion
You have kindled in my breast ?
Trifling is the inclination
That by words can be expressed.

In my silence see the lover ;
True love is by silence known ;
In my eyes you'll best discover,
All the power of your own."

* The Hon. John Hervey (1696-1743), younger son of John, first Earl of Bristol ; known as Lord Hervey after the death of his elder brother Carr in 1723 ; Vice-Chamberlain of George II's Household, 1730 ; created Baron Hervey of Ickworth, 1733, Lord Privy Seal, 1740-1742.

For Hervey, however, Lady Mary came to have a strong liking that many believed to have, as she would have said, bordered upon " the tender " ; although it is on record that she once remarked that she divided the human race into men, women, and Herveys. They met whenever they could ; when they could not meet they corresponded. Pope bitterly resented the intimacy between Lady Mary and Hervey, and in the *Epistle of Arbuthnot* gave vent to the malignity with which his soul had been for years overflowing :

" P. Let Sporus tremble.
A. What ? That thing of silk ;
Sporus, that mere white curd of ass's milk ?
Satire or sense, alas ! can Sporus feel ?
Who breaks a butterfly on the wheel ?
P. Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings ;
Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet wit ne'er tastes and beauty ne'er enjoys :
So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks ;
Or at the ear of Eve,* familiar toad,
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,
In pun, or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies.
His wit all see-saw, between that and this,
Now high, now low, now make up, now miss,
And he himself one vile antithesis.
Amphibious thing ! that acting either part,
The trifling head, or the corrupted heart ;
Fop at the hostel, flatterer at the board,
Now trips a lady, and now struts a Lord.
Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins have expressed,
A cherub's face—a reptile all the rest.
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none can trust,
Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust."

This was a heavy price to pay for the favours even of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

Whatever the relations between Lady Mary and Hervey,

* Queen Caroline.

Lady Hervey was not indulgent to them, which may have inspired Lady Mary to write to her sister: "Lady Hervey, by aiming too high, has fallen very low; and is reduced to trying to persuade folks she has an intrigue, and gets nobody to believe her; the man in question taking a great deal of pains to clear himself of the scandal." Lady Hervey and Mrs. Murray were active partisans of Lord Grange in his persecution of Lady Mary, and aided him in his attempts to get possession of her sister, Lady Mar.

The bad terms on which Lady Mary and Lady Hervey were is most clearly defined by Lady Louisa Stuart: "At the time of Lady Mary Wortley's return home [in 1762, after an absence abroad of more than twenty years], Lady Hervey was living in great intimacy with Lady Bute, for whom she professed, and it is believed really felt, the highest esteem and admiration. On hearing of her mother's arrival, she came to her, owning herself embarrassed by the fear of giving her pain or offence, but yet compelled to declare that formerly something had passed between her and Lady Mary which made any renewal of their acquaintance impossible; therefore, if she forbore visiting her, she threw herself upon Lady Bute's friendship and candour for pardon. No explanation followed. Lady Bute, who must have early seen the necessity of taking care not to be entangled in her mother's quarrels, which, to speak truth, were seldom few in number, only knew that there had been an old feud between her, Lady Hervey, and Lady Hervey's friend, Mrs. (or Lady) Murray; the particulars of which, forgotten even then by everybody but themselves, may well be now beyond recall."

During this period there were several domestic happenings in Lady Mary's family.

On March 5, 1726, died her father, the Duke of Kingston. After the accession of George I, the Marquess of Dorchester (as he then was) was high in favour at Court, and honours were showered upon him with a lavish hand. He was in 1714 appointed Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire, and in the same year

Chief Justice in Eyre, north of Trent, which latter dignity he held for two years. In August, 1715, he was created Duke of Kingston upon Hull, in the county of Yorkshire. He held the high office of Lord Privy Seal from 1716 to 1719 in the Administrations of Townshend and Stanhope, in the latter year becoming Lord President of the Council. When Walpole became First Lord of the Treasury, the Duke again became Lord Privy Seal, and held the post until his death. He was given the Garter in 1719, and was four times named as one of the Lord Justices of the Realm during the King's absences from England on visits to Hanover. He had married, secondly, Isabella, fifth daughter of William Bentinck, first Earl of Portland, by his first wife, Anne, daughter of Sir Edward Villiers, who survived him two years.

The Duke had never really forgiven Lady Mary for eloping. Her defiance of him hurt his pride inordinately. Everyone else to some degree at least he could control ; his young daughter not at all. Only so far were they ever reconciled that he would occasionally visit the Montagus at their London house and play with the children.

In his later years the Duke's health was unsatisfactory, but it was not thought that the end was so near. " I have now to tell you of the surprising death of my father, and a great deal of surprising management of the people about him, which I leave informing you until another time, being now under some spirit of hurry myself," Lady Mary wrote to Lady Mar in March, 1726. " I am unfeignedly sorry that I cannot send you word of a considerable legacy for yourself." On April 15 she supplemented this account ; but not to a degree to make it very intelligible :

" To be sure, the shock must be very great to you whenever you heard it ; as indeed it was to us all here, being so sudden. It is to no purpose now to relate particulars, but only renewing our grief. I can't forbear telling you the Duchess has behaved very oddly in endeavouring to get the guardianship of the

young Duke and his sister, contrary to her husband's will; but the boy, when he was fourteen, confirmed the trustees his grandfather left; so that ended all disputes; and Lady Fanny is to live with my aunt Cheyne. There is a vast number of things that have happened, and some people's behaviour so extraordinary in this melancholy business, that it would be great ease of mind if I could tell it you; but I must not venture to speak too freely in a letter."

A week or so later, some further details were forthcoming:

"I received yours, dear sister, this minute, and am very sorry both for your past illness and affliction; though *au bout du compte*, I don't know why filial piety should exceed fatherly fondness. So much by way of consolation As to the management at that time—I do verily believe, if my good aunt and sister had been less fools, and my dear mother-in-law less mercenary, things might have had a turn more to your advantage and mine too; when we meet, I will tell you many circumstances which would be tedious in a letter. I could not get my sister Gower to join to act with me, and mamma and I were in an actual scold when my poor father expired; she has shewn a hardness of heart upon this occasion that would appear incredible to any body not capable of it themselves. The addition to her jointure is, one way or other, £2000 per annum; so her good Grace remains a passable rich widow, and is already presented by the town with a variety of young husbands; but I believe her constitution is not good enough to let her amorous inclinations get the better of her covetous."

Lady Mary was very angry, because she heard that at the end her father had really expressed a great deal of kindness to her, and even a desire of talking to her, which the Duchess would not permit. However, he left her in his will, she having married without a settlement, £6,000 for her separate use during her life, with reversion to her daughter.

As regards the heir, she wrote : " The Duke of Kingston has hitherto had so ill an education, 'tis hard to make any judgment of him ; he has spirit, but I fear he will never have his father's good sense. As young noblemen go, 'tis possible he may make a good figure among them."

The young Duke was sent to France, and there was much discussion as to what should be done with his sister, Lady Frances Pierrepont. Her having £400 per annum for maintenance, has, Lady Mary remarked ironically, " awakened the consciences of half her relations to take care of her education, and (excepting myself) they have all been squabbling about her. My sister Gower carries her off to-morrow morning to Staffordshire. The lies, twaddles, and contrivances about this affair are innumerable. I should pity the poor girl if I saw she pitied herself."

Lady Gower did not long enjoy her victory over her friends and her fond relations, for she died in June, 1727.

In May, 1732, Lord Mar died at Aix-la-Chapelle. Lady Mary's sister, Lady Mar, in later years suffered from mental irregularity. Her brother-in-law, James Erskine, Lord Grange, endeavoured to secure possession of her person by some process of law, but was thwarted by Lady Mary, who obtained a warrant from the King's Bench. For years Lady Mar remained in her sister's custody. She survived until 1761. There was a rumour that Lady Mary treated her badly, but there is no reason to believe that there was any substantial ground for the accusation.

Lady Mary's daughter, Mary, married in 1736, John Stuart, third Earl of Bute, the favourite of the Princess of Wales, and afterwards Prime Minister.

CHAPTER XIII

ON THE CONTINENT (1739-1744)

Lady Mary leaves England—She does not return for twenty years—Montagu supposed to join her—The domestic relations of the Montagus—A septennial act for marriage—Lady Mary corresponds with her husband—Dijon—Turin—Venice—Bologna—Florence—The Monastery of La Trappe—Horace Walpole at Florence—His comments on Lady Mary and her friends—Reasons for his dislike of her—Rome—The Young Pretender and Henry, Cardinal York—Wanderings—Cheapness of life in Italy—Lady Mary's son, Edward—He is a great trouble to his parents—His absurd marriage—His extravagance and folly—Account of his early years—He visits Lady Mary at Valence—Her account of the interviews.

In July, 1739, Lady Mary went abroad. She did not return until the beginning of 1762, a few months before her death.

She went abroad without her husband, and, indeed, they never met again. At first, apparently, he had intended to join her—at least so she gave Lady Pomfret to understand :

" You have put me to a very difficult choice, yet, when I consider we are both in Italy, and yet do not see one another, I am astonished at the capriciousness of my fortune " (she wrote from Venice late in 1739). " My affairs are so uncertain, I can answer for nothing that is future. I have taken some pains to put the inclination for travelling into Mr. Wortley's head, and was so much afraid he would change his mind, that I hastened before him in order (at least) to secure my journey. He proposed following me in six weeks, his business requiring his presence at Newcastle. Since that, the change of scene that has happened in England has made his friends persuade him to

attend parliament this session : so that what his inclinations, which must govern mine, will be next spring I cannot absolutely foresee. For my own part, I like my own situation so well that it will be a displeasure to me to change it. To postpone such a conversation as yours a whole twelvemonth is a terrible appearance ; on the other hand, I would not follow the example of the first of our sex, and sacrifice for a present pleasure a more lasting happiness. In short, I can determine nothing on this subject. When you are at Florence, we may debate it over again."

So little is known of the domestic relations of the Montagus that it is hazardous to advance a conjecture. One writer has suggested that there was a quarrel over money, but there are no grounds to support this. Another has it that Lady Mary's flirtations or intrigues did not meet with her husband's approval. Yet another thinks that Montagu found his wife with her sharp tongue, very ill to live with.

The Montagus had been married for seven-and-twenty years ; their younger child was now twenty-one. Since Montagu assisted Lady Mary as a girl with her Latin studies, they do not seem to have had much in common. Lady Mary cut a figure in the social world ; Montagu was a nonentity in political life and seemed content so to be. Perhaps they were tired of each other, and welcomed a separation that at the outset was intended only to be temporary. " It was from the customs of the Turks that I first had the thought of a septennial bill for the benefit of married persons," Lady Mary once said to Joseph Spence ; and it is more than likely that she would have taken advantage of such an Act of Parliament had it been in existence.

That there was no definite breach is evident from the fact that husband and wife corresponded, though it must be confessed that her letters to her husband are almost uniformly dull, except when the topic is their son. On the other hand, there was certainly no especial degree of friendship between them, and in one of her letters Lady Mary said pointedly :

HENRIETTA LOUISA, COUNTESS OF POMFRET.

Engraved from a Picture in Crayons by Caroline Watson.

p. 202.

" You do not seem desirous to hear news, which makes me not trouble you with any." For the rest there are descriptions of the places which Lady Mary visited and an account of the people she met.

Lady Mary proceeded from Dover to Calais, and thence to Dijon, where she arrived in the middle of August. Wherever she went she found herself among friends. " There is not any town in France where there is not English, Scotch or Irish families established ; and I have met with people who have seen me (though often such as I do not remember to have seen) in every town I have passed through ; and I think the farther I go, the more acquaintance I meet," she told her husband. At Dijon there were no less than sixteen families of fashion. Lord Mansel had lodgings in the house with her at Dijon, and Mrs. Whitsted, a daughter of Lord Bathurst, resided in the same street. She met Lady Peterborough, and just missed the Duke of Rutland, at St. Omer. At Port Beauvoisin she ran across Lord Carlisle.

From Turin, she travelled, on the advice of Lord Carlisle, to Vienna, which he declared was the best place in Italy in which to stay. The fact that it was the intention of Lady Pomfret to remove from Sienna to Vienna was the deciding factor. She liked the latter city so well that she remained there until August of the following year (1740). It had one great merit in Lady Mary's eyes, that it was cheap. Next to that, she derived pleasure from the consideration with which she was treated. " I like this place extremely, and am of opinion you would do so too : as to cheapness, I think 'tis impossible to find any part of Europe where both the laws and customs are so contrived purposely to avoid expenses of all sorts ; and here is a universal liberty that is certainly one of the greatest *agrêments* in life. We have foreign ambassadors from all parts of the world, who have all visited me. I have received visits from many of the noble Venetian ladies ; and upon the whole I am very much at my ease here. If I was writing to Lady Sophia, I would tell her of the comedies and operas which are every night, at very

low prices ; but I believe even you will agree with me that they are ordered to be as convenient as possible, every mortal going in a mask, and consequently no trouble in dressing, or forms of any kind." So Lady Mary wrote to Lady Pomfret on October 10 ; and a few days later she supplemented the information in a letter to her husband :

" I find myself very well here. I am visited by the most considerable people of the town, and all the foreign ministers, who have most of them made great entertainments for me. I dined yesterday at the Spanish ambassador's, who even surpassed the French in magnificence. He met me at the hall-door, and the lady at the stair-head, to conduct me through the long apartment ; in short, they could not have shown me more honours, if I had been an ambassadress. She desired me to think myself patrona del casa, and offered me all the services in her power, to wait on me where I pleased, &c. They have the finest palace in Venice. What is very convenient, I hear it is not at all expected I should make any dinners, it not being the fashion for anybody to do it here but the foreign ministers ; and I find I can live here very genteelly on my allowance. I have already a very agreeable general acquaintance ; though when I came, here was no one I had ever seen in my life, but the Cavaliere Grimani and the Abbé Conti. I must do them [the] justice to say they have taken pains to be obliging to me. The Procurator brought his niece (who is at the head of his family) to wait on me ; and they invited me to reside with them at their palace on the Brent, but I did not think it proper to accept of it. He also introduced me to the Signora Pisani Mocenigo, who is the most considerable lady here. The Nuncio is particularly civil to me ; he has been several times to see me, and has offered me the use of his box at the opera. I have many others at my service, and, in short it, is impossible for a stranger to be better received than I am. Here are no English, except a Mr. Bertie and his governor, who arrived two days ago, and who intends but a short stay."

Lady Mary thoroughly enjoyed herself at Venice, where she found a variety of occupations to occupy her time. In the mornings she was "wrapt up among my books with antiquarians and virtuosi"; in the afternoons there were visits to pay and receive; in the evenings dinners (at other people's expense—which fact did not detract from her pleasure), assemblies, and the theatre and the opera. In fact, she found there every delight except scandal, but that she did not miss, because she said, she "never found any pleasure in malice." So strange a thing is human nature that perhaps she believed it!

"Upon my word, I have spoken my real thoughts in relation to Venice; but I will be more particular in my description, lest you should find the same reason of complaint you have hitherto experienced" (she wrote in November to Lady Pomfret). "It is impossible to give any rule for the agreeableness of conversation; but here is so great a variety, I think 'tis impossible not to find some to suit every taste. Here are foreign ministers from all parts of the world, who, as they have no Court to employ their hours, are overjoyed to enter into commerce with any stranger of distinction. As I am the only lady here at present, I can assure you I am courted, as if I was the only one in the world. As to all the conveniences of life, they are to be had at very easy rates; and for those that love public places, here are two playhouses and two operas constantly performed every night, at exceeding low prices. But you will have no reason to examine that article, no more than myself; all the ambassadors having boxes appointed them; and I have every one of their keys at my service, not only for my own person, but whoever I please to carry or send. I do not make much use of this privilege, to their great astonishment. It is the fashion for the greatest ladies to walk the streets, which are admirably paved; and a mask, price sixpence, with a little cloak, and the head of a domino, the genteel dress to carry you everywhere. The greatest equipage is a gondola, that holds eight persons, and is the price of an English chair. And

it is so much the established fashion for everybody to live their own way, that nothing is more ridiculous than censuring the actions of another. This would be terrible in London, where we have little other diversion ; but for me, who never found any pleasure in malice, I bless my destiny that has conducted me to a part where people are better employed than in talking of the affairs of their acquaintance. It is at present excessive cold (which is the only thing I have to find fault with), but in recompense we have a clear bright sun, and fogs and factions things unheard of in this climate."

Certainly everybody did the utmost to make Venice agreeable to Lady Mary. With all her good opinion of herself and of her position, she found herself treated with more distinction than she "could possibly expect." When, on Christmas Eve, she went to see the ceremony of High Mass celebrated by the Doge, she was surprised to find that he had set aside for her and the Prince of Wolfenbüttel a gallery, to which none were admitted but their parties. "A greater compliment could not have been paid me if I had been a sovereign Princess." To her husband she wrote : "It is impossible to be better treated, I may even say more courted, than I am here."

All the English who came to Venice, as a matter of course paid their respects to Lady Mary.

"Lord Fitzwilliam arrived here three days ago ; he came to see me the next day, as all the English do, who are much surprised at the civilities and familiarity which I am with the noble ladies. Everybody tells me 'tis what never was done but to myself ; and I own I have a little vanity in it, because the French ambassador told me when I first came, that though the Procurator Grimani might persuade them to visit me, he defied me to enter into any sort of intimacy with them : instead of which they call me out almost every day on some diversion or other, and are desirous to have me in all their parties of pleasure. I am invited to-morrow to the Foscarini to dinner,

which is to be followed by a concert and a ball, where I shall be the only stranger, though here are at present a great number come to see the regatta, which is fixed for the 29th of this month, N.S. I shall see it at the Procurator Grimani's, where there will be a great entertainment that day. My own house is very well situated to see it, being on the Grand Canal; but I would not refuse him and his niece, since they seem desirous of my company, and I shall oblige some other ladies with my windows. They are hired at a great rate to see the show."

There was just one fly in the ointment.

"I am impatient to hear good sense pronounced in my native tongue; having only heard my language out of the mouths of boys and governors for these five months" (she complained to Lady Pomfret). "Here are inundations of them broke in upon us this carnival, and my apartment must be their refuge; the greater part of them having kept an inviolable fidelity to the languages their nurses taught them; their whole business abroad (as far as I can perceive) being to buy new clothes, in which they shine in some obscure coffee-house, where they are sure of meeting only one another; and after the important conquest of some waiting gentlewoman of an opera queen, whom perhaps they remember as long as they live, return to England excellent judges of men and manners. I find the spirit of patriotism so strong in me every time I see them, that I look on them as the greatest blockheads in nature; and, to say truth, the compound of booby and *petit maître* makes up a very odd sort of animal."

It was not until the middle of August (1740) that Lady Mary left Venice, going first to Bologna, where she stayed a day or two "to prepare for the dreadful passage of the Apennines." On her way to Florence, she visited the monastery of La Trappe—her account of which may be given as a companion portrait to that of the nunnery printed in an earlier chapter.

" The monastery of La Trappe, is of French origin, and one of the most austere and self-denying orders I have met with. In this gloomy retreat it gave me pain to observe the infatuation of men, who have devoutly reduced themselves to a much worse condition than that of the beasts. Folly, you see, is the lot of humanity, whether it arises in the flowery paths of pleasure, or the thorny ones of an ill-judged devotion. But of the two sorts of fools, I shall always think that the merry one has the most eligible fate ; and I cannot well form a notion of that spiritual and ecstatic joy, that is mixed with sighs, groans, hunger, and thirst, and the other complicated miseries of monastic discipline. It is a strange way of going to work for happiness to excite an enmity between soul and body, which Nature and Providence have designed to live together in union and friendship, and which we cannot separate like man and wife when they happen to disagree. The profound silence that is enjoined upon the monks of La Trappe is a singular circumstance of their unsociable and unnatural discipline, and were this injunction never to be dispensed with, it would be needless to visit them in any other character than as a collection of statues ; but the superior of the convent suspended in our favour that rigorous law, and allowed one of the mutes to converse with me, and answer a few discreet questions. He told me that the monks of this order in France are still more austere than those of Italy, as they never taste wine, flesh, fish, or eggs ; but live entirely upon vegetables. The story that is told of the institution of this order is remarkable, and is well attested, if my information is good. Its founder was a French nobleman whose name was Bouthillier de Rancé, a man of pleasure and gallantry, which were converted into the deepest gloom of devotion by the following incident. His affairs obliged him to absent himself, for some time, from a lady with whom he had lived in the most intimate and tender connexions of successful love. At his return to Paris he proposed to surprise her agreeably, and, at the same time, to satisfy his own impatient desire of seeing her, by going directly and without ceremony to her

apartment by a back stair, which he was well acquainted with—but think of the spectacle that presented itself to him at his entrance into the chamber that had so often been the scene of love's highest raptures! his mistress dead—dead of the small-pox—disfigured beyond expression—a loathsome mass of putrified matter—and the surgeon separating the head from the body, because the coffin had been made too short! He stood for a moment motionless in amazement, and filled with horror—and then retired from the world, shut himself up in the convent of La Trappe, where he passed the remainder of his days in the most cruel and disconsolate devotion.—Let us quit this sad subject."

The news that Lady Mary was coming to Florence came to the ears of Horace Walpole, who was staying there. If he had not yet made her acquaintance, he certainly knew much about her. "On Wednesday we expect a third she-meteor," he wrote to Richard West, July 31, 1740. "Those learned luminaries the Ladies Pomfret and Walpole * are to be joined by the Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. You have not been witness to the rhapsody of mystic nonsense which these two fair ones debate incessantly, and consequently cannot figure what must be the issue of this triple alliance: we have some idea of it. Only figure the coalition of prudery, debauchery, sentiment, history, Greek, Latin, French, Italian and metaphysics; all, except the second, understood by halves, by quarters, or not at all. You shall have the journals of this notable academy." Walpole sent, some seven weeks later, an account of the lady to the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway: "Did I tell you Lady Mary Wortley is here? She laughs at my Lady Walpole, scolds my Lady Pomfret, and is laughed at by the whole town. Her dress, her avarice, and her impudence must amaze any one that never heard her name. She wears a foul mob, that does not cover her greasy black locks, that hang loose, never combed or curled,

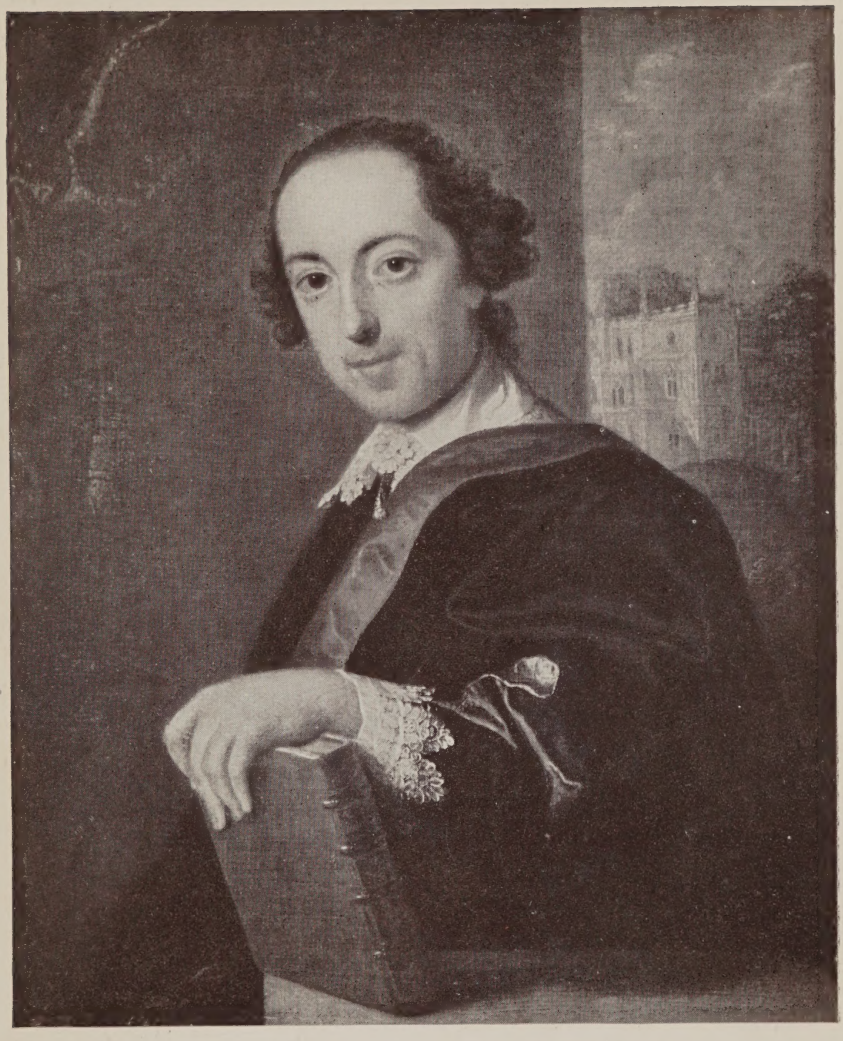
* The wife of the eldest son of Sir Robert Walpole, who in 1723 was created Baron Walpole. He later succeeded as (second) Earl of Orford.

an old mazarine blue wrapper, that gapes open and discovers a canvas petticoat. Her face swollen violently on one side is partly covered with a plaister, and partly with white paint, which for cheapness she has bought so coarse, that you would not use it to wash a chimney."

In another letter, to Richard West (October 2, 1740), Walpole gives an account of the "Academy." "But for the Academy, I am not of it; but frequently in company with it," he wrote. "'Tis all disjointed. Madame——,* who, though a learned lady, has not lost her modesty and character, is extremely scandalised with the two other dames, especially with Moll Worthless,† who knows no bounds. She is at rivalry with Lady W——‡ for a certain Mr.——, whom perhaps you knew at Oxford. . . . He fell into sentiments with my Lady W., and was happy to catch her at platonic love; but as she seldom stops there, the poor man will be frightened out of his senses when she shall break the matter to him, for he never dreamt that her purposes were so naught. Lady Mary is so far gone that to get him from the mouth of her antagonist, she literally took him out to dance country dances at a formal ball, where there was no measure kept in laughing at her. . . . She played at Pharaoh two or three times at Princess Craon's, where she cheats horse and foot. She is really entertaining: I have been reading her works, which she lends out in manuscript; but they are too womanish: I like few of her performances."

Lady Mary was, of course, entirely ignorant of Horace Walpole's feelings about her, of which naturally he showed no sign in social intercourse with her. "I saw him often both at Florence and Genoa, and you may believe I know him," she told her daughter. "I was well acquainted with Mr. Walpole at Florence, and indeed he was particularly civil to me," she wrote on another occasion. "I have great encouragement to ask favour of him, if I did not know that few people have so

* Lady Pomfret. † Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.
‡ Lady Walpole.



HORACE WALPOLE.

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good memories to remember so many years backwards as have passed since I have seen him. If he has treated the character of Queen Elizabeth with disrespect [in *A Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors of England*], all the women should tear him to pieces, for abusing the glory of their sex. Neither is it just to put her in the list of authors, having never published anything, though we have Mr. Camden's authority that she wrote many valuable pieces, chiefly Greek translations. I wish all monarchs would bestow their leisure hours on such studies : perhaps they would not be very useful to mankind ; but it may be asserted, for a certain truth, their own minds could be more improved than by the amusements of quadrille or Cavagnole."

Lady Mary need not have feared that Walpole had forgotten her ; he bore her much in mind to his dying day, and found never a kind thing to say about her. It may be presumed that his animosity arose from the fact that Lady Mary had championed Molly Skerritt against his mother, when Miss Skerritt was living openly as the mistress of Sir Robert Walpole. Yet, though he wrote so abusively about her, he concerned himself with a new edition of the *Court Poems*, though with what right has never transpired. " I have lately had Lady Mary Wortley's Ecloques published ; but they don't please, though so excessively good," he wrote to Sir Horace Mann, November 24, 1747. " I say so confidently, for Mr. Chute agrees with me : he says, for the *Epistle from Arthur Grey*, scarce any woman could have written it, and no man ; for a man who had had experience enough to paint such sentiments so well, would not have had warmth enough left. Do you know anything of Lady Mary ? Her adventurous son is come in Parliament, but has not opened."

From Florence, Lady Mary repaired to Rome. There, she did not see the Chevalier de St. George, but she did see his two sons, Charles Edward, the Young Pretender, and Henry, Cardinal York. " The eldest seems thoughtless enough, and is really not unlike Mr. Lyttelton in his shape and air," she wrote to Montagu. " The youngest is very well made, dances finely,

and has an ingenuous countenance ; he is but fourteen years of age. The family live very splendidly, yet pay everybody, and (wherever they get it) are certainly in no want of money."

Lady Mary seems to have had no prepared itinerary, but to have wandered as the spirit moved her—Naples, Leghorn, Turin, Genoa. The cheapness of Italy appealed to her frugal mind.

" The manners of Italy are so much altered since we were here last, the alteration is scarce credible. They say it has been by the last war. The French, being masters, introduced all their customs, which were eagerly embraced by the ladies, and I believe will never be laid aside ; yet the different governments make different manners in every state. You know, though the republic is not rich, here are many private families vastly so, and live at a great superfluous expense : all the people of the first quality keep coaches as fine as the Speaker's, and some of them two or three, though the streets are too narrow to use them in the town ; but they take the air in them, and their chairs carry them to the gates. The liveries are all plain : gold or silver being forbidden to be worn within the walls, the habits are all obliged to be black, but they wear exceeding fine lace and linen ; and in their country-houses, which are generally in the faubuurg, they dress very rich, and have extreme fine jewels. Here is nothing cheap but houses. A palace fit for a prince may be hired for fifty pounds per annum ; I mean unfurnished. All games of chance are strictly prohibited, and it seems to me the only law they do not try to evade : they play at quadrille, piquet, &c., but not high. Here are no regular public assemblies. I have been visited by all of the first rank, and invited to several fine dinners, particularly to the wedding of one of the house of Spinola, where there were ninety-six sat down to table, and I think the entertainment one of the best I ever saw. There was the night following a ball and supper for the same company, with the same profusion. They tell me that all their great marriages are kept

in the same public manner. Nobody keeps more than two horses, all their journeys being post; the expense of them, including the coachman, is (I am told) fifty pounds per annum. A chair is very near as much; I give eighteen francs a week for mine. The senators can converse with no strangers during the time of their magistracy, which lasts two years. The number of servants is regulated, and almost every lady has the same, which is two footmen, a gentleman-usher, and a page, who follows her chair.

Certainly the simple life appealed to Lady Mary, but much as she liked Geneva the cost of living irked her. "Everything is as dear as it is at London," she complained to her husband in November, 1741. "'Tis true, as all equipages are forbidden, that expense is entirely retrenched. . . . The way of living is absolutely the reverse of that in Italy. Here is no show, and a great deal of eating; there is all the magnificence imaginable, and no dinners but on particular occasions; yet the difference of the prices renders the total expense very near equal. . . . The people here are very well to be liked, and this little republic has an air of the simplicity of old Rome in its earliest age. The magistrates toil with their own hands, and their wives literally dress their dinners against their return from their little senate. Yet without dress and equipage 'tis as dear living here for a stranger, as in places where one is obliged to both, from the price of all sort of provision, which they are forced to buy from their neighbours, having almost no land of their own." How much more agreeable, from Lady Mary's point of view, was Chambery: "Here is the most profound peace and unbounded plenty that is to be found in any corner of the universe; but not one rag of money. For my part, I think it amounts to the same thing, whether one is obliged to give several pence for bread, or can have a great deal of bread for a penny, since the Savoyard nobility here keep as good tables, without money, as those in London, who spend in a week what would be here a considerable yearly revenue. Wine, which is equal to the best burgundy,

is sold for a penny a quart, and I have a cook for very small wages, that is capable of rivalling Chloé."

" My girl gives me great prospect of satisfaction, but my young rogue of a son is the most ungovernable little rake that ever played truant," Lady Mary wrote to Lady Mar in July, 1727, when the boy was fourteen and the girl nine years old.

It has already been mentioned that young Edward, who was placed at Westminster School at the early age of five, ran away. In fact, he ran away more than once. " My blessed offspring has already made a great noise in the world," his mother told Lady Mar in July, 1726. " That young rake, my son, took to his heels t'other day and transported his person to Oxford ; being in his own opinion thoroughly qualified for the University. After a good deal of search we found and reduced him, much against his will, to the humble condition of a schoolboy. It happens very luckily that the sobriety and discretion is of my daughter's side ; I am sorry the ugliness is so too, for my son grows extremely handsome." The lad was incorrigible. In the following year he disappeared for some months, to be found selling fish at Blackwall.

" My cousin is going to Paris, and I will not let her go without a letter for you, my dear sister, though I was never in a worse humour for writing " (the anxious mother wrote to her sister). " I am vexed to the blood by my young rogue of a son ; who has contrived at his age to make himself the talk of the whole nation. He is gone knight-erranting, God knows where ; and hitherto 'tis impossible to find him. You may judge of my uneasiness by what your own would be if dear Lady Fanny was lost. Nothing that ever happened to me has troubled me so much ; I can hardly speak or write of it with tolerable temper, and I own it has changed mine to that degree I have a mind to cross the water, to try what effect a new heaven and a new earth will have upon my spirit."

[Later, Edward ran away again, joining the crew of a ship

going to Oporto, and was not discovered in that city until a considerable period had elapsed since his flight.

He capped all his follies by marrying at the age of twenty a woman of no social standing and much older than himself.

His parents were at their wits' end. It was hopeless to treat him as a rational being. His wife was induced to accept a pension to leave him, and he himself was put in charge of a keeper. Several times he had to be kept in close confinement. He was, however, by no means devoid of brains, and in the autumn of 1741 he had sufficiently recovered to be entered as a student at the University of Leyden. His allowance was £300 a year, which he found so insufficient for the indulgence of his tastes that he was soon considerably in debt.

In Lady Mary's correspondence there are many letters to her husband about their son.

" Genoa, Aug. 15, 1741.

" I am sorry to trouble you on so disagreeable a subject as our son, but I received a letter from him last post, in which he solicits your dissolving his marriage, as if it was wholly in your power, and the reason he gives for it, is so that he may marry more to your satisfaction. It is very vexatious (though no more than I expected) that time has no effect, and that it is impossible to convince him of his true situation. He enclosed this letter in one to Mr. Birtles, and tells me that he does not doubt that debt of £200 is paid. You may imagine this silly proceeding occasioned me a dun from Mr. Birtles. I told him the person that wrote the letter, was, to my knowledge, not worth a groat, which was all I thought proper to say on the subject."

" Lyons, April 23, 1742.

" I am very glad you have been prevailed on to let our son take a commission : if you had prevented it, he would have always said, and perhaps thought, and persuaded other people,

you had hindered his rising in the world ; though I am fully persuaded that he can never make a tolerable figure in any station of life. When he was at Morins, on his first leaving France, I then tried to prevail with him to serve the Emperor as volunteer ; and represented to him that a handsome behaviour one campaign might go a great way in retrieving his character ; and offered to use my interest with you (which I said I did not doubt would succeed) to furnish him with a handsome equipage. He then answered, he supposed I wished him killed out of the way. I am afraid his pretended reformation is not very sincere. I wish time may prove me in the wrong. I here enclose the last letter I received from him ; I answered it the following post in these words :

" ' I am very glad you resolve to continue obedient to your father, and are sensible of his goodness towards you. Mr. Birtles showed me your letter to him, in which you enclosed yours to me, where you speak to him as your friend ; subscribing yourself his faithful humble servant. He was at Genoa in his uncle's house when you was there, and well acquainted with you ; though you seem ignorant of everything relating to him. I wish you would make such sort of apologies for any errors you may commit. I pray God your future behaviour may redeem the past, which will be a great blessing to your affectionate mother.'

" I have not since heard from him ; I suppose he knew not what to say to so plain a detected falsehood. It is very disagreeable to me to converse with one from whom I do not expect to hear a word of truth, and who, I am very sure, will repeat many things that never passed in our conversation. You see the most solemn assurances are not binding from him, since he could come to London in opposition to your commands, after having so frequently protested he would not move a step except by your order. However, as you insist on my seeing him, I will do it, and think Valence the properest town for that interview ; it is but two days' journey from this place ; it is in Dauphiné. . .

" I shall stay here till I have an answer to this letter. If you order your son to go to Valence, I desire you would give him a strict command of going by a feigned name. I do not doubt your returning me whatever money I may give him ; but as I believe, if he receives money from me, he will be making me frequent visits, it is clearly my opinion I should give him none. Whatever you may think proper for his journey, you may remit to him."

" Lyons, April 25 [1742].

" On recollection (however inconvenient it may be to me on many accounts), I am not sorry to converse with my son. I shall at least have the satisfaction of making a clear judgment of his behaviour and temper : which I shall deliver to you in the most sincere and unprejudiced manner. You need not apprehend that I shall speak to him in passion. I do not know that I ever did in my life. I am not apt to be overheated in discourse, and am so far prepared, even for the worst on his side, that I think nothing he can say can alter the resolution I have taken of treating him with calmness. Both nature and interest (were I inclined to follow blindly the dictates of either) would determine me to wish him your heir rather than a stranger ; but I think myself obliged both by honour, conscience and my regard for you, no way to deceive you ; and I confess, hitherto I see nothing but falsehood and weakness through his whole conduct. It is possible this person may be altered since I saw him, but his figure then was very agreeable and his manner insinuating. I very well remember the professions he made to me, and do not doubt he is as lavish of them to other people. Perhaps Lord Carteret may think him no ill match for an ugly girl that sticks upon his hands. The project of breaking his marriage shows at least his devotion counterfeit, since I am sensible it cannot be done but by false witness. His wife is not young enough to get gallants, nor rich enough to buy them.

" I make choice of Valence for our interview as a town where we are not likely to find any English, and he may if he pleases

be quite unknown ; which it is hardly possible to be in any capital town either of France or Italy.

" Lyons, May 2 [1742].

" I received this morning yours of April 12, and at the same time the enclosed which I send you. 'Tis the first I have received since the detection of that falsehood in regard to Mr. Birtles. I always send my letters open, that Mr. Clifford (who has the character of sense and honesty) might be witness of what I said ; and he not left at liberty to forge orders he never received. I am very glad I have done so, and am persuaded that had his reformation been what you suppose it, Mr. Clifford would have wrote to me in his favour. I confess I see no appearance of it. His last letter to you, and this to me, seems to be no more in that submissive style he has used, but like one that thinks himself well protected. I will see him, since you desire it, at Valence ; which is a by-town, where I am less likely to meet with English than any town in France ; but I insist on his going by a feigned name, and coming without a servant. People of superior fortunes to him (to my knowledge) have often travelled from Paris to Lyons in the *diligence* ; the expense is but one hundred livres, £5 sterling, all things paid. It would not be easy to me, at this time, to send him any considerable sum ; and whatever it is, I am persuaded, coming from me, he would not be satisfied with it, and make his complaints to his companions. As to the alteration of his temper, I see the same folly throughout. He now supposes (which is at best downright childish) that one hour's conversation will convince me of his sincerity. I have not answered his letter, nor will not, till I have your orders what to say to him."

[Avignon] May 6 [1742].

" I here send you enclosed the letter I mentioned of your son's ; the packet in which it was put was mislaid in the journey ; it will serve to show you how little he is to be depended on. I saw a Savoyard man of quality at Chambery,

who knew him at Venice, and afterwards at Genoa, who asked me (not suspecting him for my son) if he was related to my family. I made answer he was some relation. He told me several tricks of his. He said, that at Genoa he had told him that an uncle of his was dead and had left him £5,000 or £6,000 per annum, and that he was returning to England to take possession of his estate; in the meantime he wanted money; and would have borrowed some of him, which he refused. I made answer that he did very well. I have heard of this sort of conduct in other places; and by the Dutch letters you have sent me I am persuaded he continues the same method of lying which convinces me that his pretended enthusiasm is only to cheat those that can be imposed on by it. However, I think he should not be hindered accepting a commission. I do not doubt it will be pawned or sold in a twelvemonth; which will prove to those that now protect him how little he deserves it. I am now at Avignon, which is within one day's journey of Valence."

"Avignon, May 23 [1742].

"I received this morning yours of April 12 and 29th, and at the same time one from my son at Paris, dated the 4th instant. I have wrote to him this day, that on his answer I will immediately set out to Valence, and shall be glad to see him there. I suppose you are now convinced I have never been mistaken in his character; which remains unchanged, and what is yet worse, I think is unchangeable. I never saw such a complication of folly and falsity as in his letter to Mr. Gibson. Nothing is cheaper than living in an inn in a country town in France; they being obliged to ask no more than twenty-five sous for dinner, and thirty for supper and lodging, of those that eat at the public table; which all the young men of quality I have met have always done. It is true I am forced to pay double, because I think the decency of my sex confines me to eat in my chamber. I will not trouble you with detecting a number of other falsehoods that are in his letters. My opinion on the

whole (since you give me leave to tell it) is, that if I was to speak in your place, I would tell him, ' That since he is obstinate in going into the army, I will not oppose it ; but as I do not approve, I will advance no equipage till I know his behaviour to be such as shall deserve my future favour. Hitherto he has always been directed, either by his own humour, or the advice of those he thought better friends to him than myself. If he renounces the army, I will continue to him his former allowance ; notwithstanding his repeated disobedience, under the most solemn professions of duty. When I see him act like a sincere honest man, I shall believe well of him ; the opinion of others, who either do not know him or are imposed on by his pretences, weighs nothing with me.' "

On May 30 Lady Mary went from Avignon to Valence, where about a week later her son visited her. She at once sent a full account to Montagu.

" Avignon, June 10 [1742.]

" I am just returned from passing two days with our son, of whom I will give you the most exact account I am capable of. He is so much altered in his person, I should scarcely have known him. He has entirely lost his beauty, and looks at least seven years older than he is ; and the wildness that he always had in his eyes is so much increased it is downright shocking, and I am afraid will end fatally. He is grown fat, but is still genteel, and has an air of politeness that is agreeable. He speaks French like a Frenchman, and has got all the fashionable expressions of that language, and a volubility of words which he always had, and which I do not wonder should pass for wit with inconsiderate people. His behaviour is perfectly civil, and I found him very submissive ; but in the main, no way really improved in his understanding, which is exceedingly weak ; and I am convinced he will always be led by the person he converses with either right or wrong, not being capable of forming any fixed judgment of his own. As to his

enthusiasm, if he had it, I suppose he has already lost it ; since I could perceive no turn of it in all his conversation. But with his head I believe it is possible to make him a monk one day and a Turk three days after. He has a flattering, insinuating manner, which naturally prejudices strangers in his favour. He began to talk to me in the usual silly cant I have so often heard from him, which I shortened by telling him I desired not to be troubled with it ; that professions were of no use where actions were expected ; and that the only thing could give me hopes of a good conduct was regularity and truth. He very readily agreed to all I said (as indeed he has always done when he has not been hot-headed). I endeavoured to convince him how favourably he has been dealt with, his allowance being much more than, had I been his father, I would have given in the same case. The Prince of Hesse, who is now married to the Princess of England, lived some years at Geneva on £300 per annum. Lord Hervey sent his son at sixteen thither, and to travel afterwards, on no larger pension than £200 ; and, though without a governor, he had reason enough, not only to live within the compass of it, but carried home little presents for his father and mother, which he showed me at Turin. In short, I know there is no place so expensive, but a prudent single man may live in it on £100 per annum, and an extravagant one may run out ten thousand in the cheapest. Had you (said I to him) thought rightly, or would have regarded the advice I gave you in all my letters, while in the little town of Islestein, you would have laid up £150 per annum ; you would now have had £750 in your pocket ; which would have almost paid your debts, and such a management would have gained you the esteem of the reasonable part of mankind. I perceived this reflection, which he had never made himself, had a very great weight with him. He would have excused part of his follies, by saying Mr. G. had told him it became Mr. W.'s son to live handsomely. I made answer, that whether Mr. G. had said so or no, the good sense of the thing was noway altered by it ; that the true

figure of a man was the opinion the world had of his sense and probity, and not the idle expenses, which were only respected by foolish or ignorant people ; that his case was particular, he had but too publicly shown his inclination to vanities, and the most becoming part he could now act would be owning the ill use he had made of his father's indulgence, and professing to endeavour to be no further expense to him, instead of scandalous complaints, and being always at his last shirt and last guinea, which any man of spirit would be ashamed to own. I prevailed so far with him that he seemed very willing to follow this advice ; and I gave him a paragraph to write to G., which I suppose you will easily distinguish from the rest of his letter. He asked me if you had settled your estate. I made answer, that I did not doubt (like all other wise men) you always had a will by you ; but that you had certainly not put anything out of your power to change. On that, he began to insinuate, that if I could prevail on you to settle the estate on him, I might expect anything from his gratitude. I made him a very clear and positive answer in these words : ' I hope your father will outlive me, and if I should be so unfortunate to have it otherwise, I do not believe he will leave me in your power. But was I sure of the contrary, no interest nor no necessity shall ever make me act against my honour or conscience ; and I plainly tell you, that I will never persuade your father to do anything for you till I think you deserve it.' He answered by great promises of future good behaviour, and economy. He is highly delighted with the prospect of going into the army ; and mightily pleased with the good reception he had from Lord Stair, though I find it amounts to no more than telling him he was sorry he had already named his aides-de-camp, and otherwise should have been glad of him in that post. He says Lord Carteret has confirmed to him his promise of a commission.

" The rest of his conversation was extremely gay. The various things he has seen has given him a superficial universal knowledge. He really knows most of the modern languages,

and if I could believe him, can read Arabic, and has read the Bible in Hebrew. He said it was impossible for him to avoid going back to Paris ; but he promised me to lie but one night there, and go to a town six posts from thence on the Flanders road, where he would wait your orders, and go by the name of Mons. du Durand, a Dutch officer ; under which name I saw him. These are the most material passages, and my eyes are so much tired I can write no more at this time. I gave him 240 livres for his journey."

No amount of admonition had any effect upon Edward. At the age of thirty he was as irresponsible as he was when he was thirteen years old. He promised his mother at Avignon most solemnly to reform, and at once got into mischief. " I am persuaded," Lady Mary said, " whoever protects him will be very soon convinced of the impossibility of his behaving like a rational creature."

" Avigon, November 20, 1743.

" As to my son's behaviour at Montelimart, it is nothing more than a proof of his weakness ; and how little he is to be depended on in his most solemn professions. He told me that he had made acqaintance with a lady on the road, who has an assembly at her house at Montelimart, and that she had invited him thither. I asked immediately if she knew his name. He assured me no, and that he passed for a Dutch officer by the name of Durand. I advised him not go thither, since it would raise a curiosity concerning him, and I was very unwilling it should be known that I had conversed with him, on many accounts. He gave me the most solemn assurances that no mortal should know it ; and agreed with me in the reasons I gave him for keeping it an entire secret ; yet rid straight to Montelimart, where he told at the assembly that he came into this country purely on my orders, and that I had stayed with him two days at Orange ; talking much of my kindness to him, and insinuating that he had another name, much more

considerable than that he appeared with. I knew nothing of this, till several months after, that a lady of that country came hither, and meeting her in company, she asked me if I was acquainted with Monsieur Durand. I had really forgot he had ever taken that name, and made answer no ; and that if such a person mentioned me, it was probably some *chevalier d'industrie* who sought to introduce himself into company by a supposed acquaintance with me. She made answer, the whole town believed so, by the improbable tales he told them ; and informed me what he had said ; by which I knew what I have related to you.

" I expect your orders in relation to his letters."

Edward was still anxious to join the army, and his parents were not averse to the scheme. Lady Mary, however,thought that certain precautions should be taken in the event of his securing a commission. " It is my opinion," she wrote to Montagu in January, 1744, " he should have no distinction, in equipage, from any other cornet ; everything of that sort will only serve to blow his vanity and consequently heighten his folly. Your indulgence has always been greater to him than any other parent's would have been in the same circumstances. I have always said so, and thought so. If anything can alter him, it will be thinking firmly that he has no dependence but on his own conduct for a future maintenance."

Edward obtained a commission, and was present at Fontenoy.

On his return to England, in 1747, he was elected to Parliament for the family borough of Huntingdon. This he held until 1754, when he was returned for the borough of Bossiney, in Cornwall, which he represented for the next eight years.

Of his subsequent career it is not necessary to say anything here, except that his father left him an annuity of £1,000 a year, to be increased to £2,000 on his mother's death. Lady Mary in her will bequeathed him one guinea.

CHAPTER XIV

LADY MARY AS A READER

Her fondness for reading—Her difficulty to get enough books while abroad—Lady Bute keeps her supplied—Lady Mary's catholic taste in literature—Samuel Richardson—The vogue of *Clarissa Harlowe*—Lady Mary tells a story of the Richardson type—Henry Fielding—*Joseph Andrews*—*Tom Jones*—Her high opinion of Fielding and Steele—Tobias Smollett—*Peregrine Pickle*—Lady Vane's *Memoirs of a Lady of Quality*—Sarah Fielding—Minor writers—Lord Orrery's *Remarks on Swift*—Bolingbroke's works—Addison and Pope—Dr. Johnson.

In her quiet retreat, Lady Mary found plenty of time for books. "I yet retain and carefully cherish my taste for reading," she wrote to her daughter in 1752. "If relays of eyes were to be hired like post-horses, I would never admit any but select companions: they afford a constant variety of entertainment, and is almost the only one pleasing in the enjoyment and inoffensive in the consequence."

Her trouble was that she could not get books enough to occupy her time. She was always asking Lady Bute to send her some, and was duly grateful when they reached her. "I fancy you are now saying, 'tis a sad thing to grow old; what does my poor mamma mean by troubling me with criticisms on books that nobody but herself will ever read? You must allow something to my solitude." And again: "I thank God my taste still continues for the gay part of reading. Wiser people may call it trifling, but it serves to sweeten life to me, and is worst better than the generality of conversation."

Lady Mary's taste in books was catholic. She has seen the "Memoirs of her old friend, the Duchess of Marlborough," but would be glad of the *Apology for a late Resignation* and of Colin Campbell's books on *Architecture.* She has read Mrs. Lennox's *The Female Quixote,* and much of Sarah Fielding; and she desires Henry Fielding's posthumous works, with his *Memoirs of Jonathan Wild* and *The Journey to the Next World;* also the *Memoirs of Verocand,* a man of pleasure, and those of a Young Lady. "You will call all this trash, trumpery, etc.," she said to her daughter. "I can assure you I was more entertained by G. Edwards than H. St. John, of whom you have sent me duplicates. I see new story books with the same pleasure your eldest daughter does a new dress, or the youngest a new baby. I thank God, I can find playthings for my age. I am not of Cowley's mind, that this world is

'A dull, ill-acted comedy;'

nor of Mr. Philips's, that it is

'A too well-acted tragedy.'

"I look upon it as a very pretty farce, for those that can see it in that light. I confess a severe critic, that would examine by ancient rules, might find many defects, but 'tis ridiculous to judge seriously of a puppet-show. Those that can laugh, and be diverted with absurdities, are the wisest spectators, be it of writings, actions, or people."

Presently Lady Mary is asking for books the names of which she has seen in the newspapers: "*Fortunate Mistress, Accomplished Rake, Mrs. Charke's Memoirs, Modern Lovers, History of Two Orphans, Memoirs of David Ranger, Miss Mostyn, Dick Hazard, History of a Lady Platonist, Sophia Shakespear, Jasper Banks, Frank Hammond, Sir Andrew Thompson, Van a Clergyman's Son, Cheantles and Celemena.* I do not doubt at least the greater part of these are trash, lumber, etc.; however, they

will serve to pass away the idle time, if you will be so kind as to send them to your most affectionate mother."

Richardson Lady Mary liked in spite of herself, as so many others then and since have done, though it is true that she spoke of the " very extraordinary (and I think undeserved) success of Pamela, which, she said, was all the fashion at Paris and Versailles, and is still the joy of the chambermaids of all nations.' "

" I was such an old fool as to weep over *Clarissa Harlowe*, like any milkmaid of sixteen over the ballad of the *Lady's Fall* (she wrote to her daughter). " To say truth, the first volume softened me by a near resemblance of my maiden days ; but on the whole 'tis most miserable stuff. Miss How, who is called a young lady of sense and honour, is not only extreme silly, but a more vicious character than Sally Martin, whose crimes are owing at first to seduction, and afterwards to necessity ; while this virtuous damsel, without any reason, insults her mother at home and ridicules her abroad ; abuses the man she marries ; and is impertinent and impudent with great applause. Even that model of affection, Clarissa, is so faulty in her behaviour as to deserve little compassion. Any girl that runs away with a young fellow, without intending to marry him, should be carried to Bridewell or to Bedlam the next day. Yet the circumstances are so laid as to inspire tenderness, notwithstanding the low style and absurd incidents ; and I look upon this and *Pamela* to be two books that will do more general mischief than the works of Lord Rochester. There is something humorous in *R. Random*, that makes me believe that the author is H. Fielding. I am horribly afraid I guess too well the writer of those abominable insipidities of *Cornelia, Leonora*, and the *Ladies' Drawing Room.*"

" This Richardson is a strange fellow," she said in another letter. " I heartily despise him, and eagerly read him, nay, sob over his works in a most scandalous manner."

" I have now read over Richardson—he sinks horribly in his third volume (he does so in his story of *Clarissa*). When he talks of Italy, it is plain he is no better acquainted with it than he is with the kingdom of Mancomugi. He might have made his Sir Charles's amour with Clementina begin in a convent, where the pensioners sometimes take great liberties, but that such familiarity should be permitted in her father's house, is as repugnant to custom, as it would be in London for a young lady of quality to dance on the ropes at Bartholomew fair : neither does his hero behave to her in a manner suitable to his nice notions. It was impossible a discerning man should not see her passion early enough to check it, if he had really designed it. His conduct puts me in mind of some ladies I have known, who could never find out a man to be in love with them, let him do or say what he would, till he made a direct attempt, and then they were so surprised, I warrant you ! Nor do I approve Sir Charles's offered compromise (as he calls it). There must be a great indifference as to religion on both sides, to make so strict a union as marriage tolerable between people of such distinct persuasions. He seems to think women have no souls, by agreeing so easily that his daughters should be educated in bigotry and idolatry.—You will perhaps think this last a hard word ; yet it is not difficult to prove, that either the papists are guilty of idolatry, or the pagans never were so. You may see in Lucian (in his vindication of his images), that they did not take their statues to be real gods, but only the representations of them. The same doctrine may be found in Plutarch ; and it is all the modern priests have to say in excuse for their worshipping wood and stone, though they cannot deny, at the same time, that the vulgar are apt to confound that distinction."

Lady Mary frequently re-read Richardson, and not seldom referred to them in her correspondence.

" It is certain there are as many marriages as ever. Richardson is so eager for the multiplication of them, I suppose he is

some parish curate, whose chief profit depends on weddings and christenings. He is not a man-midwife ; for he would be better skilled in physic than to think fits and madness any ornament to the characters of his heroines : though his Sir Charles had no thoughts of marrying Clementina till she had lost her wits, and the divine Clarissa never acted prudently till she was in the same condition, and then very wisely desired to be carried to Bedlam, which is really all that is to be done in that case. Madness is as much corporal distemper as the gout or asthma, never occasioned by affliction, or to be cured by the enjoyment of their extravagant wishes. Passion may indeed bring on a fit, but the disease is lodged in the blood, and it is not more ridiculous to attempt to relieve the gout by an embroidered slipper, than to restore reason by the gratification of wild desires.

" Richardson is as ignorant in morality as he is in anatomy, when he declares abusing an obliging husband, or an indulgent parent, to be an innocent recreation. His Anna How and Charlotte Grandison are recommended as patterns of charming pleasantry, and applauded by his saint-like dames, who mistake pert folly for wit and humour, and impudence and ill nature for spirit and fire. Charlotte behaves like a humorsome child, and should have been used like one, and*** well whipped in the presence of her friendly confidante Harriet. Lord Halifax very justly tells his daughter, that a husband's kindness is to be kindly received by a wife, even when he is drunk, and though it is wrapped up in never so much impertinence. Charlotte acts with an ingratitude that I think too black for human nature, with such coarse jokes and low expressions as are only to be heard among the lowest class of people. Women of that rank often plead a right to beat their husbands, when they don't cuckold them ; and I believe this author was never admitted into higher company, and should confine his pen to the amours of housemaids, and the conversation at the steward's table, where I imagine he has sometimes intruded, though oftener in the servants' hall : yet, if the title be not a puff, this work has

passed three editions. I do not forgive him his disrespect of old china, which is below nobody's taste, since it has been the D. of Argyll's, whose understanding has never been doubted either by his friends or enemies.

" Richardson never had probably money enough to purchase any, or even a ticket for a masquerade, which gives him such an aversion to them ; though his intended satire against them is very absurd on the account of his Harriet, since she might have been carried off in the same manner if she had been going from supper with her grandmamma. Her whole behaviour, which he designs to be exemplary, is equally blamable and ridiculous. She follows the maxim of Clarissa, of declaring all she thinks to all the people she sees, without reflecting that in this mortal state of imperfection, fig-leaves are as necessary for our minds as our bodies, and 'tis as indecent to show all we think, as all we have. He has no idea of the manners of high life : his old Lord M. talks in the style of a country justice, and his virtuous young ladies romp like the wenches round a maypole. Such liberties as pass between Mr. Lovelace and his cousins, are not to be excused by the relation. I should have been much astonished if Lord Denbigh should have offered to kiss me ; and I dare swear Lord Trentham never attempted such an impertinence to you."

Lady Mary was in sore trouble about Richardson. She would not like him, she was angry with him, yet could never away with him. When she heard of an adventure at Lovere, she, who herself had a gift for novel-writing, must needs send an account of it to Lady Bute, saying that it exactly resembled and, she believed, was copied from *Pamela*. " I know not under what constellation that foolish stuff was wrote, but it has been translated into more languages than any modern performance I ever heard of," she added. " No proof of its influence was ever stronger than this story, which in Richardson's hands would serve very well to furnish out seven or eight volumes : I shall make it as short as I can."

As an example of Lady Mary's skill in narrative, her account of the Richardsonian adventure is well worth reprinting.

" Here is a gentleman's family, consisting of an old bachelor and his sister, who have fortune enough to live with great elegance, though without any magnificence, possessed of the esteem of all their acquaintance, he being distinguished by his probity, and she by her virtue. They are not only suffered but sought by all the best company, and indeed are the most conversable, reasonable people in the place. She is an excellent housewife, and particularly remarkable for keeping her pretty house as neat as any in Holland. She appears no longer in public, being past fifty, and passes her time chiefly at home with her work, receiving few visitants. This Signora Diana, about ten years since, saw, at a monastery, a girl about eight years old, who came thither to beg alms for her mother. Her beauty, though covered with rags, was very observable, and gave great compassion to the charitable lady, who thought it meritorious to rescue such a modest sweetness as appeared in her face from the ruin to which her wretched circumstances exposed her. She asked her some questions, to which she answered with a natural civility that seemed surprising ; and finding the head of her family (her brother) to be a cobbler, who could hardly live by that trade, and her mother too old to work for her maintenance, she bid the child follow her home ; and sending for her parent, proposed to her to breed the little Octavia for her servant. This was joyfully accepted, the old woman dismissed with a piece of money, and the girl remained with the Signora Diana, who bought her decent clothes, and took pleasure in teaching her whatever she was capable of learning. She learned to read, write, and cast accounts, with uncommon facility ; and had such a genius for work, that she excelled her mistress in embroidery, point, and every operation of the needle. She grew perfectly skilled in confectionary, had a good insight into cookery, and was a great proficient in distillery. To these accomplishments she was so handy, well

bred, humble and modest, that not only her master and mistress, but everybody that frequented the house, took notice of her. She lived thus near nine years, never going out but to church. However, beauty is as difficult to conceal as light ; hers began to make a great noise. Signora Diana told me she observed an unusual concourse of pedling women that came on pretext to sell penn'orths of lace, china, etc., and several young gentlemen, very well powdered, that were perpetually walking before her door, and looking up at the windows. These prognostics alarmed her prudence, and she listened very willingly to some honourable proposals that were made by many honest, thriving tradesmen. She communicated them to Octavia, and told her, that though she was sorry to lose so good a servant, yet she thought it right to advise her to choose a husband. The girl answered modestly, that it was her duty to obey all her commands, but she found no inclination to marriage ; and if she would permit her to live single, she should think it a greater obligation than any other she could bestow. Signora Diana was too conscientious to force her into a state from which she could not free her, and left her to her own disposal. However, they parted soon after : whether (as the neighbours say) Signor Aurelio Ardinghi, her brother, looked with too much attention on the young woman, or that she herself (as Diana says) desired to seek a place of more profit, she removed to Bergamo, where she soon found preferment, being strongly recommended by the Ardinghi family. She was advanced to be first waiting-woman to an old countess, who was so well pleased with her service, she desired, on her death-bed, Count Jeronimo Sosi, her son, to be kind to her. He found no repugnance to this act of obedience, having distinguished the beautiful Octavia from his first sight of her ; and, during the six months that she had served in the house, had tried every art of a fine gentleman, accustomed to victories of that sort, to vanquish the virtue of this fair virgin. He has a handsome figure, and has had an education uncommon in this country, having made the tour of Europe, and brought from Paris all the

improvements that are to be picked up there, being celebrated for his grace in dancing, and skill in fencing and riding, by which he is a favourite among the ladies, and respected by the men. Thus qualified for conquest, you may judge of his surprise at the firm yet modest resistance of this country girl, who was neither to be moved by address, nor gained by liberality, nor on any terms would be prevailed on to stay as his housekeeper, after the death of his mother. She took that post in the house of an old judge, where she continued to be solicited by the emissaries of the count's passion, and found a new persecutor in her master, who, after three months' endeavour to corrupt her, offered her marriage. She chose to return to her former obscurity, and escaped from his pursuit, without asking any wages, and privately returned to the Signora Diana. She threw herself at her feet, and, kissing her hands, begged her, with tears, to conceal her at least some time, if she would not accept of her service. She protested she had never been happy since she left it. While she was making these submissions, Signor Aurelio entered. She entreated his intercession on her knees, who was easily persuaded to consent she should stay with them, though his sister blamed her highly for her precipitate flight, having no reason, from the age and character of her master, to fear any violence, and wondered at her declining the honour he offered her. Octavia confessed that perhaps she had been too rash in her proceedings, but said, that he seemed to resent her refusal in such a manner as frighted her ; she hoped that after a few days' search he would think no more of her ; and that she scrupled entering into the holy bands of matrimony, where her heart did not sincerely accompany all the words of the ceremony. Signora Diana had nothing to say in contradiction to this pious sentiment ; and her brother applauded the honesty which could not be perverted by any interest whatever. She remained concealed in their house, where she helped in the kitchen, cleaned the rooms, and redoubled her usual diligence and officiousness. Her old master came to Lovere on pretence of adjusting a lawsuit, three days after, and made private

inquiry after her ; but hearing from her mother and brother (who knew nothing of her being here) that they had never heard of her, he concluded she had taken another route, and returned to Bergamo ; and she continued in this retirement near a fortnight.

" Last Sunday, as soon as the day was closed, arrived at Signor Aurelio's door a handsome equipage in a large bark, attended by four well-armed servants on horseback. An old priest stepped out of it, and desiring to speak with Signora Diana, informed her he came from the Count Jeronimo Sosi to demand Octavia ; that the count waited for her at a village four miles from hence, where he intended to marry her ; and had sent him, who was engaged to perform the divine rite, that Signora Diana might resign her to his care without any difficulty. The young damsel was called for, who entreated she might be permitted the company of another priest with whom she was acquainted : this was readily granted ; and she sent for a young man that visits me very often, being remarkable for his sobriety and learning. Meanwhile, a valet-de-chambre presented her with a box, in which was a complete genteel undress for a lady. Her laced linen and fine nightgown were soon put on, and away they marched, leaving the family in a surprise not to be described.

" Signor Aurelio came to drink coffee with me next morning : his first words were, he had brought me the history of Pamela. I said, laughing, I had been tired with it long since. He explained himself by relating this story, mixed with great resentment for Octavia's conduct. Count Jeronimo's father had been his ancient friend and patron ; and this escape from his house (he said) would lay him under a suspicion of having abetted the young man's folly, and perhaps expose him to the anger of all his relations, for contriving an action he would rather have died than suffered, if he had known how to prevent it. I easily believed him, there appearing a latent jealousy under his affliction, that showed me he envied the bridegroom's happiness, at the same time he condemned his extravagance.

"Yesterday noon, being Saturday, Don Joseph returned, who has got the name of Parson Williams by this expedition: he relates, that when the bark which carried the coach and train arrived, they found the amorous count waiting for his bride on the bank of the lake: he would have proceeded immediately to the church; but she utterly refused it, till they had each of them been at confession; after which the happy knot was tied by the parish priest. They continued their journey, and came to their palace at Bergamo in a few hours, where everything was prepared for their reception. They received the communion next morning, and the count declares that the lovely Octavia has brought him an inestimable portion, since he owes to her the salvation of his soul. He has renounced play, at which he had lost a great deal of time and money. She has already retrenched several superfluous servants, and put his family into an exact method of economy, preserving all the splendour necessary to his rank. He has sent a letter in his own hand to her mother, inviting her to reside with them, and subscribing himself her dutiful son: but the countess has sent another privately by Don Joseph, in which she advises the old woman to stay at Lovere, promising to take care she shall want nothing, accompanied with a token of twenty sequins, which is at least nineteen more than ever she saw in her life.

"I forgot to tell you that from Octavia's first serving the old lady, there came frequent charities in her name to her poor parent, which nobody was surprised at, the lady being celebrated for pious works, and Octavia known to be a great favourite with her. It is now discovered that they were all sent by the generous lover, who has presented Don Joseph very handsomely, but he has brought neither letter nor message to the house of Ardinghi, which affords much speculation."

Lady Mary followed this narrative with her reflections. She was sure that all these adventures proceeded from artifice on one side and weakness on the other. "An honest, tender mind," she says, "is betrayed to ruin by the charms that make the

fortune of a designing head, which, when joined with a beautiful face, can never fail of advancement, except barred by a wise mother, who locks up her daughters from view till nobody cares to look on them." She instanced the case of " my poor friend " the Duchess of Bolton, who " was educated in solitude, with some choice books, by a saint-like governess : crammed with virtue and good qualities, she thought it impossible not to find gratitude, though she failed to give passion ; and upon this plan threw away her estate, was despised by her husband, and laughed at by the public." Lady Mary compared the case of the Duchess with that of " Polly, bred in an ale-house, and produced on the stage, who has obtained wealth and title, and found the way to be esteemed." This particular instance hardly furnishes the basis for the general rule laid down by her : " So useful is early experience—without it half of life is dissipated in correcting the errors that we have been taught to receive as indisputable truths." According to all accounts Charles Paulet, third Duke of Bolton, was at the age of twenty-eight forced by his father to marry Lady Anne Vaughan, only daughter and heiress of John, Earl of Carbery. When the old Duke died in 1722 they separated. Some years later the Duke took for his mistress Lavinia Fenton, the " Polly " in Gay's " Beggar's Opera." On the death of his wife in 1751 he married her.

Henry Fielding, was Lady Mary's second cousin ; but there had never been any intimacy between them, athough some acquaintance. The novelist was eighteen years the younger. In 1727, when he was twenty and near the beginning of his career as a playwright, he had consulted her about his comedy, " Love in Several Masques," of which, when it was published in the following year, he sent her a copy. " I have presumed to send your Ladyship a copy of the play which you did me the honour of reading three acts last spring and hope it may meet as light a censure from your Ladyship's judgment as then ; for while your goodness permits me (what I esteem the greatest and

indeed only happening of my life) to offer my unworthy performances to your perusal, it will be entirely from your sentence that they will be regarded or disesteemed by me." Fielding wrote Lady Mary another letter about four years later : " I hope your Ladyship will honour the scenes which I presume to lay before you, with your perusal. As they are written on a model I never yet attempted, I am exceedingly anxious less they should find less mercy from you than my lighter productions. It will be a slight compensation to ' The Modern Husband ' that your Ladyship's censure will defend him from the possibility of any other reproof, since your least approbation will always give me pleasure, infinitely superior to the loudest applauses of a theatre. For whatever has passed your judgment may, I think, without any imputation of immodesty, refer want of success to want of judgment in an audience. I shall do myself the honour of waiting upon your Ladyship at Twickenham to receive my sentence."

One evening when she arrived home, after having ridden twenty miles in the moonlight, she found a box of books, and pouncing upon her cousin Fielding's works, sat up all night reading.

" I think *Joseph Andrews* better than his *Foundling*.* I believe I was the more struck with it, having at present a Fanny in my own house, not only by the name, which happens to be the same, but the extraordinary beauty, joined with an understanding yet more extraordinary at her age, which is but few months past sixteen : she is in the post of my chambermaid. I fancy you will tax my discretion for taking a servant thus qualified ; but my woman, who is also my housekeeper, was always teasing me with her having too much work, and complaining of ill-health, which determined me to take her a deputy ; and when I was at Lovere, where I drank the waters, one of the most considerable merchants there pressed me to take this daughter of his : her mother has an uncommon good character, and the

* *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling.*

girl has had a better education than is usual for those of her rank ; she writes a good hand, and has been brought up to keep accounts, which she does to great perfection ; and had herself such a violent desire to serve me, that I was persuaded to take her : I do not yet repent it from any part of her behaviour. But there has been no peace in the family ever since she came into it ; I might say the parish, all the women in it having declared open war with her, and the men endeavouring at treaties of a different sort : my own woman puts herself at the head of the first party, and her spleen is increased by having no reason for it, the young creature never stirring from my apartment, always at needle, and never complaining of anything."

Later Lady Mary has more to say about Fielding's books :

" H. Fielding has given a true picture of himself and his first wife, in the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Booth, some compliments to his own figure excepted ; and, I am persuaded, several of the incidents he mentions are real matters of fact. I wonder he does not perceive Tom Jones and Mr. Booth are sorry scoundrels. All these sort of books have the same fault, which I cannot easily pardon, being very mischievous. They place a merit in extravagant passions, and encourage young people to hope for impossible events, to draw them out of the misery they chose to plunge themselves into, expecting legacies from unknown relations, and generous benefactors to distressed virtue, as much out of nature as fairy treasures. Fielding has really a fund of true humour, and was to be pitied at his first entrance into the world, having no choice, as he said himself, but to be a hackney writer, or a hackney coachman. His genius deserved a better fate ; but I cannot help blaming that continued indiscrétion, to give it the softest name, that has run through his life, and I am afraid still remains. I guessed *Random* to be his though without his name. I cannot think *Ferdinand Count Fathom* wrote by the same hand, it is every way so much below it."

The Adventures of Roderick Random (1748) and *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753) were published anonymously. Lady Mary was not the only one to attribute *Roderick Random* to Fielding, and it was actually translated into French in his name.

When Lady Mary heard of Fielding's death, she expressed deep regret :

" I am sorry for H. Fielding's death, not only as I shall read no more of his writings, but I believe he lost more than others, as no man enjoyed life more than he did, though few had less reason to do so, the highest of his preferment being raking in the lowest sinks of vice and misery. I should think it a nobler and less nauseous employment to be one of the staff-officers that conduct the nocturnal weddings. His happy constitution (even when he had, with great pains, half demolished it) made him forget everything when he was before a venison pasty, or over a flask of champagne ; and I am persuaded he has known more happy moments than any prince upon earth. His natural spirits gave him rapture with his cook-maid, and cheerfulness when he was fluxing in a garret. There was a great similitude between his character and that of Sir Richard Steele. He had the advantage both in learning and, in my opinion, genius : they both agreed in wanting money in spite of all their friends, and would have wanted it, if their hereditary lands had been as extensive as their imagination ; yet each of them was so formed for happiness ; it is a pity he was not immortal."

Writing of imaginative prose literature generally, Lady Mary wrote :

" The general want of invention which reigns among our writers, inclines me to think it is not the natural growth of our island, which has not sun enough to warm the imagination. The press is loaded by the servile flock of imitators. Lord B. [Bolingbroke] would have quoted Horace in this place. Since

I was born, no original has appeared excepting Congreve and Fielding, who would, I believe, have approached nearer to his excellences, if not forced by necessity to publish without correction, and throw many productions into the world he would have thrown into the fire if meat could have been got without money, or money without scribbling. The greatest virtue, justice, and the most distinguishing prerogative of mankind, writing, when duly executed, do honour to human nature ; but when degenerated into trades, are the most contemptible ways of getting bread. I am sorry not to see any more of Peregrine Pickle's performances : I wish you would tell me his name."

It appears strange that Lady Mary should have been ignorant, when she wrote the above passage in July or August, 1755, of the authorship of *Roderick Random*, for in January of that year she had evinced an interest in Smollett : " I am sorry my friend Smollett loses his time in translations ; he has certainly a talent for invention, though I think it flags a little in his last work. *Don Quixote* is a difficult undertaking : I shall never desire to read any attempt to redress him. Though I am a mere piddler in the Spanish language, I had rather take pains to understand him in the original than sleep over a stupid translation."

Peregrine Pickle, however, Lady Mary had read shortly after its appearance in 1751 :

" I began by your direction with *Peregrine Pickle*. I think Lady Vane's *Memoirs** contain more truth and less malice than any I ever read in my life. When she speaks of her own being disinterested, I am apt to believe she really thinks herself so, as many highwaymen, after having no possibility of retrieving the character of honesty, please themselves with that of being

* Frances Anne Hawes (1713-1788) married Lord William Douglas in 1731, and after his death, William, second Viscount Vane, in 1735. She was notorious for profligacy and extravagance of all kinds. She was responsible for the scandalous *Memoirs of a Lady of Quality* which she paid Smollett to insert in *Peregrine Pickle*.

generous, because, whatever they get on the road, they always spend at the next ale-house, and are still as beggarly as ever. Her history, rightly considered, would be more instructive to young women than any sermon I know. They may see there what mortifications and variety of misery are the unavoidable consequences of gallantries. I think there is no rational creature that would not prefer the life of the strictest Carmelite to the round of hurry and misfortune she has gone through. Her style is clear and concise, with some strokes of humour, which appear to me so much above her, I can't help being of opinion the whole has been modelled by the author of the book in which it is inserted, who is some subaltern admirer of hers. I may judge wrong, she being no acquaintance of mine, though she has married two of my relations. Her first wedding was attended with circumstances that made me think a visit not at all necessary, though I disobliged Lady Susan by neglecting it; and the second, which happened soon after, made her so near a neighbour, that I rather choose to stay the whole summer in town than partake of her balls and parties of pleasure, to which I did not think it proper to introduce you; and had no other way of avoiding it, without incurring the censure of a most unnatural mother for denying you diversions that the pious Lady Ferrers permitted to her exemplary daughters. Mr. Shirley has had uncommon fortune in making the conquest of two such extraordinary ladies, equal in their heroic contempt of shame, and eminent above their sex, the one for beauty, and the other wealth, both which attract the pursuit of all mankind, and have been thrown into his arms with the same unlimited fondness. He appeared to me gentile [*sic*], well bred, well shaped and sensible; but the charms of his face and eyes, which Lady Vane describes with so much warmth, were, I confess, always invisible to me, and the artificial part of his character very glaring, which I think her story shows in a strong light."

Of minor novelists Lady Mary had also something to say from time to time.

" Sally [Fielding] has mended her style in her last volume of *David Simple*, which conveys a useful moral, though she does not seem to have intended it : I mean, shows the ill consequences of not providing against casual losses, which happen to almost everybody. Mrs. Orgueil's character is well drawn, and is frequently to be met with. The *Art of Tormenting*, the *Female Quixote** and *Sir C. Goodville* are all sale work. I suppose they proceed from her pen, and heartily pity her, constrained by her circumstances to seek her bread by a method, I do not doubt, she despises. Tell me who is that accomplished countess she celebrates. I left no such person in London ; nor can I imagine who is meant by the English Sappho mentioned in Betsy Thoughtless, whose adventures and those of Jenny Jessamy, gave me some amusement."

. . . . .

" I have read *The Cry* † and if I would write in the style to be admired by good Lord Orrery, I would tell you *The Cry* made me ready to cry, and the *Art of Tormenting* tormented me very much. I take them to be Sally Fielding's, and also the *Female Quixote* ; the plan of that is pretty, but ill executed : on the contrary, the fable of *The Cry* is the most absurd I ever saw, but the sentiments generally just ; and I think, if well dressed, would make a better body of ethics than Bolingbroke's. Her inventing new words, that are neither more harmonious or significant than those already in use, is intolerable.

. . . . .

" The next book I laid my hand on was *The Parish Girl* which interested me enough not to be able to quit it till it was read over, though the author has fallen into the common mistake of romance-writers ; intending a virtuous character, and not knowing how to draw it ; the first step of his heroine (leaving her patroness's house) being altogether absurd and ridiculous, justly entitling her to all the misfortunes she met with.

* By Charlotte Lennox.
† By Sarah Fielding and Miss Collier.

" Candles came (and my eyes grown weary), I took up the next book, merely because I supposed from the title it could not engage me long. It was *Pompey the Little*,* which has really diverted me more than any of the others, and it was impossible to go to bed till it was finished. It was a real and exact representation of life, as it is now acted in London, as it was in my time, and as it will be (I do not doubt) a hundred years hence, with some little variation of dress, and perhaps government. I found there many of my acquaintance. Lady T. and Lady O. are so well painted, I fancied I heard them talk, and have heard them say the very things there repeated. . . .

" I opened my eyes this morning on *Leonora*, from which I defy the greatest chemist in morals to extract any instruction ; the style most affectedly florid, and naturally insipid, with such a confused heap of admirable characters, that never were, or can be, in human nature. I flung it aside after fifty pages, and laid hold of *Mrs. Philips*, where I expected to find at least probable, if not true facts, and was not disappointed. There is a great similitude in the genius and adventures (the one being productive of the other) between Madame Constantia and Lady Vane : the first mentioned has the advantage in birth and, if I am not mistaken, in understanding : they have both had scandalous lawsuits with their husbands, and are endowed with the same intrepid assurance. Con. seems to value herself also on her generosity, and has given the same proofs of it. The parallel might be drawn out to be as long as any of Plutarch's ; but I dare swear you are already heartily weary of my remarks, and wish I had not read so much in so short a time, that you might not be troubled with my comments ; but you must suffer me to say something of the polite Mr. S^{te}, whose name I should never have guessed by the rapturous description his mistress makes of his person, having always looked upon him as one of the most disagreeable

* By Francis Coventry.

fellows about town, as odious in his outside as stupid in his conversation, and I should as soon have expected to hear of his conquests at the head of an army as among women ; yet he has been, it seems, the darling favourite of the most experienced of the sex, which shows me I am a very bad judge of merit. But I agree with Mrs. Philips, that, however profligate she may have been, she is infinitely his superior in virtue ; and if her penitence is as sincere as she says, she may expect their future fate to be like that of Dives and Lazarus."

Lady Mary received from her daughter a copy of Lord Orrery's *Remarks on the Life and Writings of Jonathan Swift*, published in 1751, six years after the death of Swift. This book so aroused the ire of Lady Mary that, writing of it, she attacked everyone concerned.

" Lord Orrery's work has extremely entertained, and not at all surprised me, having the honour of being acquainted with him, and knowing him for one of those danglers after wit, who, like those after beauty, spend their time in humbly admiring, and are happy in being permitted to attend, though they are laughed at, and only encouraged to gratify the insatiate vanity of those professed wits and beauties who aim at being publicly distinguished in those characters. Dean Swift, by his lordship's own account, was so intoxicated with the love of flattery, he sought it amongst the lowest of the people, and the silliest of women ; and was never so well pleased with any companions as those that worshipped him while he insulted them. It is a wonderful condescension in a man of quality to offer his incense in such a crowd, and think it an honour to share a friendship with Sheridan, &c., especially being himself endowed with such universal merit as he displays in these Letters, where he shows that he is a poet, a patriot, a philosopher, a physician, a critic, a complete scholar, and most excellent moralist ; shining in private life as a submissive son, a tender father, and zealous friend. His only error has been that love of learned ease which he has indulged in a solitude, which has

prevented the world from being blest with such a general, minister, or admiral, being equal to any of these employments, if he would have turned his talents to the use of the public. Heaven be praised, he has now drawn his pen in its service, and given an example to mankind that the most villanous actions, nay, the coarsest nonsense, are only small blemishes in a great genius. I happen to think quite contrary, weak woman as I am. I have always avoided the conversation of those who endeavour to raise an opinion of their understanding by ridiculing what both law and decency obliges them to revere; but, whenever I have met with any of those bright spirits who would be smart on sacred subjects, I have ever cut short their discourse by asking them if they had any lights and revelations by which they would propose new articles of faith? Nobody can deny but religion is a comfort to the distressed, a cordial to the sick, and sometimes a restraint on the wicked; therefore, whoever would argue or laugh it out of the world, without giving some equivalent for it, ought to be treated as a common enemy: but, when this language comes from a churchman, who enjoys large benefices and dignities from that very Church he openly despises, it is an object of horror for which I want a name, and can only be excused by madness, which I think the Dean was strongly touched with. His character seems to me a parallel with that of Caligula; and had he had the same power would have made the same use of it. That emperor erected a temple to himself, where he was his own high priest, preferred his horse to the highest honours in the state, professed enmity to [the] human race, and at last lost his life by a nasty jest on one of his inferiors, which I dare swear Swift would have made in his place. There can be no worse picture made of the Doctor's morals than he has given us himself in the letters printed by Pope. We see him vain, trifling, ungrateful to the memory of his patron, the Earl of Oxford, making a servile court where he had any interested views, and meanly abusive when they were disappointed, and, as he says (in his own phrase), flying in the face of mankind, in company with his adorer Pope. It is

pleasant to consider, that, had it not been for the good nature of these very mortals they contemn, these two superior beings were entitled, by their birth and hereditary fortune, to be only a couple of link-boys. I am of opinion their friendship would have continued, though they had remained in the same kingdom: it had a very strong foundation—the love of flattery on the one side, and the love of money on the other. Pope courted with the utmost assiduity all the old men from whom he could hope a legacy, the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Peterborough, Sir G. Kneller, Lord Bolingbroke, Mr. Wycherley, Mr. Congreve, Lord Harcourt, &c., and I do not doubt projected to sweep the Dean's whole inheritance, if he could have persuaded him to throw up his deanery, and come to die in his house; and his general preaching against money was meant to induce people to throw it away, that he might pick it up. There cannot be a stronger proof of his being capable of any action for the sake of gain than publishing his literary correspondence, which lays open such a mixture of dulness and iniquity, that one would imagine it visible even to his most passionate admirers, if Lord Orrery did not show that smooth lines have as much influence over some people as the authority of the Church in these countries, where it cannot only veil, but sanctify any absurdity or villany whatever. It is remarkable that his lordship's family have been smatterers in wit and learning for three generations: his grandfather has left monuments of his good taste in several rhyming tragedies, and the romance of Parthenissa. His father began the world by giving his name to a treatise wrote by Atterbury and his club, which gained him great reputation; but (like Sir Martin Marall, who would fumble with his lute when the music was over) he published soon after a sad comedy of his own, and, what was worse, a dismal tragedy he had found among the first Earl of Orrery's papers. People could easier forgive his being partial to his own silly works, as a common frailty, than the want of judgment in producing a piece that dishonoured his father's memory.

"Thus fell into dust a fame that had made a blaze by

borrowed fire. To do justice to the present lord, I do not doubt this fine performance is all his own, and is a public benefit, if every reader has been as well diverted with it as myself. I verily believe it has contributed to the establishment of my health."

Nor was Lady Mary more kindly about the writings and character of Lord Bolingbroke, for whom she had always had a feeling even more of hatred than disapproval.

"I have now read over the books you were so good to send, and intend to say something of them all, though some are not worth speaking of" (she wrote to her daughter). "I shall begin, in respect to his dignity, with Lord Bolingbroke, who is a glaring proof how far vanity can blind a man, and how easy it is to varnish over to one's self the most criminal conduct. He declares he always loved his country, though he confesses he endeavoured to betray her to popery and slavery; and loved his friends, though he abandoned them in distress, with all the blackest circumstances of treachery. His account of the Peace of Utrecht is almost equally unfair or partial: I shall allow that, perhaps, the views of the Whigs, at that time, were too vast and the nation, dazzled by military glory, had hopes too sanguine; but sure the same terms that the French consented to, at the treaty of Gertruydenberg, might have been obtained; or if the displacing of the Duke of Marlborough raised the spirits of our enemies to a degree of refusing what they had before offered, how can he excuse the guilt of removing him from the head of a victorious army, and exposing us to submit to any articles of peace, being unable to continue the war? I agree with him, that the idea of conquering France is a wild, extravagant notion, and would, if possible, be impolitic; but she might have been reduced to such a state as would have rendered her incapable of being terrible to her neighbours for some ages: nor should we have been obliged, as we have done almost ever since, to bribe the French ministers to let us live

in quiet. So much for his political reasonings, which, I confess, are delivered in a florid, easy style ; but I cannot be of Lord Orrery's opinion, that he is one of the best English writers. Well-turned periods or smooth lines are not the perfection either of prose or verse ; they may serve to adorn, but can never stand in the place of good sense. Copiousness of words, however ranged, is always false eloquence, though it will ever impose on some sort of understandings. How many readers and admirers has Madame de Sévigné, who only gives us, in a lively manner and fashionable phrases, mean sentiments, vulgar prejudices, and endless repetitions ? Sometimes the tittle-tattle of a fine lady, sometimes that of an old nurse, always tittle-tattle ; yet so well gilt over by airy expressions, and a flowing style, she will always please the same people to whom Lord Bolingbroke will shine as a first-rate author. She is so far to be excused, as her letters were not intended for the press ; while her labours to display to posterity all the wit and learning he is master of, and sometimes spoils a good argument by a profusion of words, running out into several pages a thought that might have been more clearly expressed in a few lines, and, what is worse, often falls into contradiction and repetitions, which are almost unavoidable to all voluminous writers, and can only be forgiven to those retailers whose necessity compels them to diurnal scribbling, who load their meaning with epithets, and run into digressions, because (in the jockey phrase) it rids the ground, that is, covers a certain quantity of paper, to answer the demand of the day. A great part of Lord B.'s letters are designed to show his reading, which, indeed, appears to have been very extensive ; but I cannot perceive that such a minute account of it can be of any use to the pupil he pretends to instruct ; nor can I help thinking he is far below either Tillotson or Addison, even in style, though the latter was sometimes more diffuse than his judgment approved, to furnish out the length of a daily *Spectator*. I own I have small regard for Lord B. as an author, and the highest contempt for him as a man. He came into the world greatly favoured both

by nature and fortune, blest with a noble birth, heir to a large estate, endowed with a strong constitution, and, as I have heard, a beautiful figure, high spirits, a good memory and a lively apprehension, which was cultivated by a learned education : all these glorious advantages being left to the direction of a judgment stifled by unbounded vanity, he dishonoured his birth, lost his estate, ruined his reputation, and destroyed his health, by a wild pursuit of eminence even in vice and trifles.

" I am far from making misfortune a matter of reproach. I know there are accidental occurences not to be foreseen or avoided by human prudence, by which a character may be injured, wealth dissipated, or a constitution impaired : but I think I may reasonably despise the understanding of one who conducts himself in such a manner as naturally produces such lamentable consequences, and continues in the same destructive paths to the end of a long life, ostentatiously boasting of morals and philosophy in print, and with equal ostentation bragging of the scenes of low debauchery in public conversation, though deplorably weak both in mind and body, and his virtue and his vigour in a state of non-existence. His confederacy with Swift and Pope puts me in mind of that of Bessus and his sword-men, in the *King and no King*,* who endeavour to support themselves by giving certificates of each other's merit. Pope has triumphantly declared that they may do and say whatever silly things they please, they will still be the greatest geniuses nature ever exhibited. I am delighted with the comparison given of their benevolence, which is indeed most aptly figured by a circle in the water, which widens till it comes to nothing at all ; but I am provoked at Lord B.'s misrepresentation of my favourite Atticus, who seems to have been the only Roman that, from good sense, had a true notion of the times in which he lived, in which the republic was inevitably perishing, and the two factions, who pretended to support it, equally endeavouring to gratify their ambition in

* A play by Beaumont and Fletcher, licensed for the stage in 1611.

its ruin. A wise man, in that case, would certainly declare for neither, and try to save himself and family from the general wreck, which could not be done but by a superiority of understanding acknowledged on both sides. I see no glory in losing life or fortune by being the dupe of either, and very much applaud that conduct which could preserve an universal esteem amidst the fury of opposite parties. We are obliged to act vigorously, where action can do any good ; but in a storm, when it is impossible to work with success, the best hands and ablest pilots may laudably gain the shore if they can. Atticus could be a friend to men without engaging in their passions, disapprove their maxims without awaking their resentment, and be satisfied with his own virtue without seeking popular fame : he had the reward of his wisdom in his tranquillity, and will ever stand among the few examples of true philosophy, either ancient or modern. . . .

" I must add a few words on the *Essay on Exile,* which I read with attention, as a subject that touched me. I found the most abject dejection under a pretended fortitude. That the author felt it, can be no doubt to one that knows (as I do) the mean submissions and solemn promises he made to obtain a return, flattering himself (I suppose) he need only appear to be at the head of the administration, as every ensign of sixteen fancies he is in a fair way to be a general on the first sight of his commission.

" You will think I have been too long on the character of Atticus. I own I took pleasure in explaining it. Pope thought himself covertly very severe on Mr. Addison by giving him that name ; and I feel indignation when he is abused, both from his own merit, and having been your father's friend ; besides that it is naturally shocking to see any one lampooned after his death by the same man who had paid him the most servile court while he lived and was highly obliged by him."

As a periodical writer she compared Johnson unfavourably with Steele and Addison :

"The *Rambler* is certainly a strong misnomer; he always plods in the beaten road of his predecessors, following the *Spectator* (with the same pace a pack-horse would do a hunter) in the style that is proper to lengthen a paper. These writers may, perhaps, be of service to the public, which is saying a great deal in their favour. There are numbers of both sexes who never read anything but such productions, and cannot spare time, from doing nothing, to go through a sixpenny pamphlet. Such gentle readers may be improved by a moral hint, which, though repeated over and over, from generation to generation, they never heard in their lives. I should be glad to know the name of this laborious author."

CHAPTER XV

LADY MARY ON EDUCATION AND WOMAN'S RIGHTS

The choice of books for children's reading—The dangers of a narrow education—Lady Mary advocates the higher education of women—Girls should be taught languages—Lady Mary's theories of education for girls—Women writers in Italy—A " rumpus " made by ladies in the House of Lords—Woman's Rights—Lady Mary's views on religion.

In spite of her own fondness for books, Lady Mary was not a wholehearted believer in reading for young folk, unless the choice of volumes was carefully made by some competent person. This point she emphasised in one of her letters to her daughter.

" I can't forbear saying something in relation to my granddaughters, who are very near my heart. If any of them are fond of reading, I would not advise you to hinder them (chiefly because it is impossible) seeing poetry, plays, or romances ; but accustom them to talk over what they read, and point out to them, as you are very capable of doing, the absurdity often concealed under fine expressions, where the sound is apt to engage the admiration of young people. I was so much charmed, at fourteen, with the dialogue of Henry and Emma, I can say it by heart to this day, without reflecting on the monstrous folly of the story in plain prose, where a young heiress to a fond father is represented falling in love with a fellow she had only seen as a huntsman, a falconer, and a beggar, and who confesses, without any circumstances of excuse, that he is

obliged to run his country, having newly committed a murder. She ought reasonably to have supposed him, at best, a highwayman ; yet the virtuous virgin resolves to run away with him, to live among the banditti, and wait upon his trollop, if she had no other way of enjoying his company. This senseless tale is, however, so well varnished with melody of words and pomp of sentiments, I am convinced it has hurt more girls than ever were injured by the lewdest poems extant."

Life, Lady Mary was at pains to insist upon, is a much better instructor for the young than any story-book, however innocuous it may seem to grown-up people, who for the greater number have not the faculty of seeing how the tale would have affected them in their childhood.

" I congratulate my granddaughters on being born in an age so much enlightened. Sentiments are certainly extreme silly, and only qualify young people to be the bubbles of all their acquaintance. I do not doubt the frequency of assemblies has introduced a more enlarged way of thinking ; it is a kind of public education, which I have always thought as necessary for girls as for boys. A woman married at five-and-twenty, from under the eye of a strict parent, is commonly as ignorant as she was at five ; and no more capable of avoiding the snares, and struggling with the difficulties, she will infallibly meet with in the commerce of the world. The knowledge of mankind (the most useful of all knowledge) can only be acquired by conversing with them. Books are so far from giving that instruction, they fill the head with a set of wrong notions, from whence spring the tribes of Clarissas, Harriets, &c. Yet such was the method of education when I was in England, which I had it not in my power to correct ; the young will always adopt the opinions of all their companions, rather than the advice of their mothers."

" Ignorance and a narrow education lay the foundations of

vice," Mary Astell had laid down as an axiom, and Lady Mary was always propounding this to her daughter.

"I am extremely concerned to hear you complain of ill health, at a time of life when you ought to be in the flower of your strength. I hope I need not recommend to you the care of it: the tenderness you have for your children is sufficient to enforce you to the utmost regard for the preservation of a life so necessary to their well-being. I do not doubt your prudence in their education: neither can I say anything particular relating to it at this distance, different tempers requiring different management. In general, never attempt to govern them (as most people do) by deceit: if they find themselves cheated, even in trifles, it will so far lessen the authority of their instructor, as to make them neglect all their future admonitions. And, if possible, breed them free from prejudices; those contracted in the nursery often influence the whole life after, of which I have seen many melancholy examples. I shall say no more of this subject, nor would have said this little if you had not asked my advice: 'tis much easier to give rules than to practise them. I am sensible my own natural temper is too indulgent: I think it the least dangerous error, yet still it is an error. I can only say with truth, that I do not know in my whole life having ever endeavoured to impose on you, or give a false colour to anything that I represented to you. If your daughters are inclined to love reading, do not check their inclination by hindering them of the diverting part of it; it is as necessary for the amusement of women as the reputation of men; but teach them not to expect or desire any applause from it. Let their brothers shine, and let them content themselves with making their lives easier by it, which I experimentally know is more effectually done by study than any other way. Ignorance is as much the fountain of vice as idleness, and indeed generally produces it. People that do not read, or work for a livelihood, have many hours they know not how to employ; especially women, who commonly fall into vapours, or something worse."

Lady Mary was an advocate, one of the earliest advocates, for the higher education of woman. Although she had educated herself, she realised that the circumstances in her case were exceptional, and no doubt it was also borne in on her that she had been an exceptional girl even as she was a remarkable woman. It was not so much lack of education against which she tilted, as ill-directed studies.

"You have given me a great deal of satisfaction by your account of your eldest daughter. I am particularly pleased to hear she is a good arithmetician; it is the best proof of understanding: the knowledge of numbers is one of the chief distinctions between us and the brutes. If there is anything in blood, you may reasonably expect your children should be endowed with an uncommon share of good sense. Mr. Wortley's family and mine have both produced some of the greatest men that have been born in England: I mean Admiral Sandwich, and my grandfather, who was distinguished by the name of Wise William. I have heard Lord Bute's father mentioned as an extraordinary genius, though he had not many opportunities of showing it; and his uncle, the present Duke of Argyll, has one of the best heads I ever knew. I will therefore speak to you as supposing Lady Mary not only capable, but desirous of learning; in that case by all means let her be indulged in it. You will tell me I did not make it a part of your education: your prospect was very different from hers. As you had no defect either in mind or person to hinder, and much in your circumstances to attract, the highest offers, it seemed your business to learn how to live in the world, as it is hers to know how to be easy out of it. It is the common error of builders and parents to follow some plan they think beautiful (and perhaps is so), without considering that nothing is beautiful that is displaced. Hence we see so many edifices raised that the raisers can never inhabit, being too large for their fortunes. Vistas are laid open over barren heaths, and apartments contrived for a coolness very agreeable in Italy, but killing in the north of Britain: thus every woman endeavours to breed her

daughter a fine lady, qualifying her for a station in which she will never appear, and at the same time incapacitating her for that retirement to which she is destined. Learning, if she has a real taste for it, will not only make her contented, but happy in it. No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting. She will not want new fashions, nor regret the loss of expensive diversions, or variety of company, if she can be amused with an author in her closet. To render this amusement extensive, she should be permitted to learn the languages. I have heard it lamented that boys lose so many years in mere learning of words : this is no objection to a girl, whose time is not so precious : she cannot advance herself in any profession, and has therefore more hours to spare ; and as you say her memory is good, she will be very agreeably employed this way. There are two cautions to be given on this subject : first, not to think herself learned when she could read Latin, or even Greek. Languages are more properly to be called vehicles of learning than learning itself, as may be observed in many schoolmasters, who, though perhaps critics in grammar, are the most ignorant fellows upon earth. True knowledge consists in knowing things, not words. I would wish her no further a linguist than to enable her to read books in their originals, that are often corrupted, and always injured, by translations. Two hours' application every morning will bring this about much sooner than you can imagine, and she will have leisure enough besides to run over the English poetry, which is a more important part of a woman's education than it is generally supposed. Many a young damsel has been ruined by a fine copy of verses, which she would have laughed at if she had known it had been stolen from Mr. Waller. I remember, when I was a girl, I saved one of my companions from destruction, who communicated to me an epistle she was quite charmed with. As she had a natural good taste, she observed the lines were not so smooth as Prior's or Pope's, but had more thought and spirit than any of theirs. She was wonderfully delighted with such a demonstration of her lover's sense and passion,

and not a little pleased with her own charms, that had force enough to inspire such elegancies. In the midst of this triumph I showed her that they were taken from Randolph's poems, and the unfortunate transcriber was dismissed with the scorn he deserved. To say truth, the poor plagiary was very unlucky to fall into my hands; that author being no longer in fashion, would have escaped any one of less universal reading than myself. You should encourage your daughter to talk over with you what she reads; and, as you are very capable of distinguishing, take care she does not mistake pert folly for wit and humour, or rhyme for poetry, which are the common errors of young people, and have a train of ill consequences. The second caution to be given her (and which is most absolutely necessary) is to conceal whatever learning she attains, with as much solicitude as she would hide crookedness or lameness; the parade of it can only serve to draw on her the envy, and consequently the most inveterate hatred, of all he and she fools, which will certainly be at least three parts in four of all her acquaintance. The use of knowledge in our sex, besides the amusement of solitude, is to moderate the passions, and learn to be contented with a small expense, which are the certain effects of a studious life; and it may be preferable even to that fame which men have engrossed to themselves, and will not suffer us to share. You will tell me I have not observed this rule myself; but you are mistaken: it is only inevitable accident that has given me any reputation that way. I have always carefully avoided it, and ever thought it a misfortune. The explanation of this paragraph would occasion a long digression, which I will not trouble you with, it being my present design only to say what I think useful for the instruction of my granddaughter, which I have much at heart. If she has the same inclination (I should say passion) for learning that I was born with, history, geography, and philosophy will furnish her with materials to pass away cheerfully a longer life than is allotted to mortals. I believe there are few heads capable of making Sir I. Newton's calculations, but the result of them is

not difficult to be understood by a moderate capacity. Do not fear this should make her affect the character of Lady ——, or Lady——, or Mrs. ——: those women are ridiculous, not because they have learning but because they have it not. One thinks herself a complete historian, after reading Echard's Roman History; another a profound philosopher, having got by heart some of Pope's unintelligible essays; and a third an able divine, on the strength of Whitefield's sermons: thus you hear them screaming politics and controversy.

"It is a saying of Thucydides, ignorance is bold, and knowledge reserved. Indeed, it is impossible to be far advanced in it without being more humbled by a conviction of human ignorance, than elated by learning. At the same time I recommend books, I neither exclude work nor drawing. I think it as scandalous for a woman not to know how to use a needle, as for a man not to know how to use a sword. I was once extremely fond of my pencil, and it was a great mortification to me when my father turned off my master, having made a considerable progress for a short time I learnt. My over-eagerness in the pursuit of it had brought a weakness on my eyes, that made it necessary to leave it off; and all the advantage I got was the improvement of my hand. I see, by hers, that practice will make her a ready writer: she may attain it by serving you for a secretary, when your health or affairs make it troublesome to you to write yourself; and custom will make it an agreeable amusement to her. She cannot have too many for that station of life which will probably be her fate. The ultimate end of your education was to make you a good wife (and I have the comfort to hear that you are one): hers ought to be, to make her happy in a virgin state. I will not say it is happier; but it is undoubtedly safer than any marriage. In a lottery, which there are (at the lowest computation) ten thousand blanks to a prize, it is the most prudent choice not to venture. I have always been so thoroughly persuaded of this truth, that, notwithstanding the flattering views I had for you (as I never intended you a sacrifice to my vanity), I thought I owed you

the justice to lay before you all the hazards attending matrimony: you may recollect I did so in the strongest manner. Perhaps you may have more success in the instructing your daughter: she has so much company at home, she will not need seeking it abroad, and will more readily take the notions you think fit to give her. As you were alone in my family, it would have been thought a great cruelty to suffer you no companions of your own age, especially having so many near relations, and I do not wonder their opinions influenced yours. I was not sorry to see you not determined on a single life, knowing it was not your father's intention, and contented myself with endeavouring to make your home so easy that you might not be in haste to leave it."

Lady Mary's views on the education of children were well in advance of her day. They were certainly not the stereotyped opinions current among governesses or even parents somewhat more enlightened than the rest, and evidently she had given much consideration to the subject before she put her thoughts on paper.

"People commonly educate their children as they build their houses, according to some plan they think beautiful, without considering whether it is suited to the purposes for which they are designed. Almost all girls of quality are educated as if they were to be great ladies, which is often as little to be expected, as an immoderate heat of the sun in the north of Scotland. You should teach yours to confine their desires to probabilities, to be as useful as is possible to themselves, and to think privacy (as it is) the happiest state of life. I do not doubt you giving them all the instructions necessary to form them to a virtuous life; but 'tis a fatal mistake to do this without proper restrictions. Vices are often hid under the name of virtues, and the practice of them followed by the worst of consequences. Sincerity, friendship, piety, disinterestedness, and generosity, are all great virtues; but,

pursued without discretion, become criminal. I have seen ladies indulge their own ill humour by being very rude and impertinent, and think they deserved approbation by saying I love to speak truth. One of your acquaintance made a ball the next day after her mother died, to show she was sincere. I believe your own reflection will furnish you with but too many examples of the ill effects of the rest of the sentiments I have mentioned, when too warmly embraced. They are generally recommended to young people without limits or distinction, and this prejudice hurries them into great misfortunes, while they are applauding themselves in the noble practice (as they fancy) of very eminent virtues.

" I cannot help adding (out of my real affection to you), I wish you would moderate that fondness you have for your children. I do not mean you should abate any part of your care, or not do your duty to them in its utmost extent : but I would have you early prepare yourself for disappointments, which are heavy in proportion to their being surprising. It is hardly possible, in such a number, that none should be unhappy ; prepare yourself against a misfortune of that kind. I confess there is hardly any more difficult to support ; yet it is certain imagination has a great share in the pain of it, and it is more in our power than it is commonly believed to soften whatever ills are founded or augmented by fancy. Strictly speaking, there is but one real evil—I mean, acute pain ; all other complaints are so considerably diminished by time, that it is plain the grief is owing to our passion, since the sensation of it vanishes when that is over.

" There is another mistake, I forgot to mention, usual in mothers : if any of their daughters are beauties, they take great pains to persuade them that they are ugly, or at least that they think so, which the young woman never fails to believe springs from envy, and is perhaps not much in the wrong. I would, if possible, give them a just notion of their figure, and show them how far it is valuable. Every advantage has its price, and may be either over or undervalued. It is

the common doctrine of (what are called) good books, to inspire a contempt of beauty, riches, greatness, &c., which has done as much mischief among the young of our sex as an over eager desire of them. They should look on these things as blessings where they are bestowed, though not necessaries that it is impossible to be happy without."

Of course, all these expressions of opinions, although here gathered together, were spread over a term of years. Yet, Lady Mary had from time to time some qualms as to how her admonitions would be received by her daughter, although, as she was careful once to point out : " I do not give them as believing my age has furnished me with superior wisdom, but in compliance with your desire."

" I cannot help writing a sort of apology for my laster letter, foreseeing that you will think it wrong, or at least Lord Bute will be extremely shocked at the proposal of a learned education for daughters, which the generality of men believe as great a profanation as the clergy would do if the laity should presume to exercise the functions of the priesthood. I desire you would take notice, I would not have learning enjoined them as a task, but permitted as a pleasure, if their genius leads them naturally to it. I look upon my granddaughters as a sort of lay nuns : destiny may have laid up other things for them, but they have no reason to expect to pass their time otherwise than their aunts do at present ; and I know, by experience, it is in the power of study not only to make solitude tolerable, but agreeable. I have now lived almost seven years in a stricter retirement than yours in the Isle of Bute, and can assure you, I have never had half an hour heavy on my hands, for want of something to do. Whoever will cultivate their own mind, will find full employment. Every virtue does not only require great care in the planting, but as much daily solicitude in cherishing, as exotic fruits and flowers. The vices and passions (which I am afraid are the natural product of the soil) demand

perpetual weeding. Add to this the search after knowledge (every branch of which is entertaining), and the longest life is too short for the pursuit of it ; which, though in some regards confined to very strait limits, leaves still a vast variety of amusements to those capable of tasting them, which is utterly impossible for those that are blinded by prejudices which are the certain effect of an ignorant education. My own was one of the worst in the world, being exactly the same as Clarissa Hawlowe's ; her pious Mrs. Norton so perfectly resembling my governess, who had been nurse to my mother, I could almost fancy the author was acquainted with her. She took so much pains, from my infancy, to fill my head with superstitious tales and false notions, it was none of her fault I am not at this day afraid of witches and hobgoblins, or turned methodist. Almost all girls are bred after this manner. I believe you are the only woman (perhaps I might say, person) that never was either frighted or cheated into anything by your parents. I can truly affirm, I never deceived anybody in my life, excepting (which I confess has often happened undesignedly) by speaking plainly ; as Earl Stanhope used to say (during his ministry) he always imposed on the foreign ministers by telling them the naked truth, which, as they thought impossible to come from the mouth of a statesman, they never failed to write informations to their respective courts directly contrary to the assurances he gave them : most people confounding the ideas of sense and cunning, though there are really no two things in nature more opposite : it is, in part, from this false reasoning, the unjust custom prevails of debarring our sex from the advantages of learning, the men fancying the improvement of our understandings would only furnish us with more art to deceive them, which is directly contrary to the truth. Fools are always enterprising, not seeing the difficulties of deceit, or the ill consequences of detection. I could give many examples of ladies whose ill conduct has been very notorious, which has been owing to that ignorance which has exposed them to idleness, which is justly

called the mother of mischief. There is nothing so like the education of a woman of quality as that of a prince: they are taught to dance, and the exterior part of what is called good breeding, which, if they attain, they are extraordinary creatures in their kind, and have all the accomplishments required by their directors. The same characters are formed by the same lessons, which inclines me to think (if I dare say it) that nature has not placed us in an inferior rank to men, no more than the females of other animals, where we see no distinction of capacity; though, I am persuaded, if there was a commonwealth of rational horses (as Doctor Swift has supposed), it would be an established maxim among them, that a mare could not be taught to pace. I could add a great deal on this subject, but I am not now endeavouring to remove the prejudices of mankind; my only design is, to point out to my granddaughters the method of being contented with that retreat, to which probably their circumstances will oblige them, and which is perhaps preferable to all the show of public life. It has always been my inclination. Lady Stafford (who knew me better than anybody else in the world, both from her own just discernment, and my heart being ever as open to her as myself) used to tell me, my true vocation was a monastery; and I now find, by experience, more sincere pleasure with my books and garden, than all the flutter of a court could give me.

"If you follow my advice in relation to Lady Mary, my correspondence may be of use to her; and I shall very willingly give her those instructions that may be necessary in the pursuit of her studies. Before her age I was in the most regular commerce with my grandmother, though the difference of our time of life was much greater, she being past forty-five when she married my grandfather. She died at ninety-six, retaining, to the last, the vivacity and clearness of her understanding, which was very uncommon. You cannot remember her, being then in your nurse's arms. I conclude with repeating to you, I only recommend, but am far from commanding, which I think I have no right to do. I tell you my

sentiments, because you desired to know them, and hope you will receive them with some partiality, as coming from

" Your most affectionate mother."

One of Lady Mary's friends was Cardinal Gerolamo Guerini, a distinguished scholar as well as a great churchman. One day, in October, 1753, he sent a request, by one of his chief chaplains, that Lady Mary would send him her printed works for the shelves that he was dedicating to English literature in the library attached to the college at Brescia that he had founded.

" I was struck dumb for some time with this astonishing request ; when I recovered my vexatious surprise (foreseeing the consequence), I made answer, I was highly sensible of the honour designed me, but, upon my word, I had never printed a single line in my life. I was answered in a cold tone, his Eminence could send for them to England, but they would be a long time coming, and with some hazard ; and that he had flattered himself I would not refuse him such a favour, and I need not be ashamed of seeing my name in a collection where he admitted none but the most eminent authors. It was to no purpose to endeavour to convince him. He would not stay to dinner, though earnestly invited ; and went away with the air of one that thought he had reason to be offended. I know his master will have the same sentiments, and I shall pass in his opinion for a monster of ingratitude, while it is the blackest of vices in my opinion, and of which I am utterly incapable—I really could cry for vexation.

" Sure nobody ever had such various provocations to print as myself. I have seen things I have wrote, so mangled and falsified, I have scarce known them. I have seen poems I never read, published with my name at length ; and others, that were truly and singly wrote by me, printed under the names of others. I have made myself easy under all these mortifications, by the reflection I did not deserve them, having never aimed at the vanity of popular applause ; but I own my

philosophy is not proof against losing a friend, and it may be making an enemy of one to whom I am obliged."

In this letter to Lady Mar, in which Lady Mary explains her plight, she goes on to deliver herself of her sentiments concerning the difference of opinion as regards women writers that was current in Italy and in England.

Lady Mary held strong views on what are called to-day, or at least were so called until they were lately in the main conceded, women's rights. Although she said that she did not complain that it was men, and men only, who were privileged to exercise the power of government, it is not unlikely that she yielded this point in order the more effectively to emphasise some other. Anyhow she was unfeignedly pleased to be able to record (to Lady Pomfret, March, 1737) a " rumpus " made by ladies who regarded their exclusion from a debate in Parliament as unwarrantable.

" I confess I have often been complimented, since I have been in Italy, on the books I have given the public. I used at first to deny it with some warmth ; but, finding I persuaded nobody, I have of late contented myself with laughing whenever I heard it mentioned, knowing the character of a learned woman is far from being ridiculous in this country, the greatest families being proud of having produced female writers ; and a Milanese lady being now professor of mathematics in the university of Bologna, invited thither by a most obliging letter, wrote by the present Pope, who desired her to accept of the chair, not as a recompense for her merit, but to do honour to a town which is under his protection. To say truth, there is no part of the world where our sex is treated with so much contempt as in England. I do not complain of men for having engrossed the government : in excluding us from all degrees of power, they preserve us from many fatigues, many dangers, and perhaps many crimes. The small proportion of authority that has fallen to my share (only over a few children

and servants) has always been a burden, and never a pleasure, and I believe every one finds it so who acts from a maxim (I think an indispensable duty), that whoever is under my power is under my protection. Those who find a joy in inflicting hardships, and seeing objects of misery, may have other sensations; but I have always thought corrections, even when necessary, as painful to the giver as to the sufferer, and am therefore very well satisfied with the state of subjection we are placed in: but I think it the highest injustice to be debarred the entertainment of my closet, and that the same studies which raise the character of a man should hurt that of a woman. We are educated in the grossest ignorance, and no art omitted to stifle our natural reason; if some few get above their nurses' instructions, our knowledge must rest concealed, and be as useless to the world as gold in the mine. I am now speaking according to our English notions, which may wear out, some ages hence, along with others equally absurd. It appears to me the strongest proof of a clear understanding in Longinus (in every light acknowledged one of the greatest men among the ancients), when I find him so far superior to vulgar prejudices as to choose his two examples of fine writing from a Jew (at that time the most despised people upon earth) and a woman. Our modern wits would be so far from quoting, they would scarce own they had read the works of such contemptible creatures, though, perhaps, they would condescend to steal from them, at the same time they declared they were below their notice. This subject is apt to run away with me; I will trouble you with no more of it."

"Here is no news to be sent you from this place, which has been for this fortnight and still continues overwhelmed with politics, and which are of so mysterious a nature, one ought to have some of the gifts of Lilly or Partridge to be able to write about them; and I leave all those dissertations to those distinguished mortals who are endowed with the talent of divination; though I am at present the only one of my sex who seems to

be of that opinion, the ladies having shown their zeal and appetite for knowledge in a most glorious manner. At the last warm debate in the House of Lords, it was unanimously resolved there should be no crowd of unnecessary auditors; consequently the fair sex were excluded, and the gallery destined to the sole use of the House of Commons. Notwithstanding which determination, a tribe of dames resolved to show on this occasion that neither men nor laws could resist them. These heroines were Lady Huntingdon, the Duchess of Queensberry, the Duchess of Ancaster, Lady Westmorland, Lady Cobham, Lady Charlotte Edwin, Lady Archibald Hamilton and her daughter, Mrs. Scott, and Mrs. Pendarves, and Lady Frances Saunderson. I am thus particular in their names, since I look upon them to be the boldest assertors, and most resigned sufferers for liberty, I ever read of. They presented themselves at the door at nine o'clock in the morning, where Sir William Saunderson respectfully informed them that the Chancellor had made an order against their admittance. The Duchess of Queensberry, as head of the squadron, pished at the ill-breeding of a mere lawyer, and desired him to let them upstairs privately. After some modest refusals, he swore by G— he would not let them in. Her Grace, with a noble warmth, answered, by G— they would come in in spite of the Chancellor and the whole House. This being reported, the Peers resolved to starve them out; an order was made that the doors should not be opened till they had raised their siege. These Amazons now showed themselves qualified for the duty of even foot soldiers; they stood there till five in the afternoon, without either sustenance or evacuation, every now and then playing volleys of thumps, kicks, and raps against the door, with so much violence that the speakers in the House were scarce heard. When the Lords were not to be conquered by this, the two duchesses (very well apprised of the use of stratagems in war) commanded a dead silence of half an hour; and the Chancellor, who thought this a certain proof of their absence (the Commons also being very impatient to enter),

gave order for the opening of the door, upon which they all rushed in, pushed aside their competitors, and placed themselves in the front rows of the gallery. They stayed there till after eleven, when the House rose ; and during the debate gave applause, and showed marks of dislike, not only by smiles and winks (which have always been allowed in these cases), but by noisy laughs and apparent contempts ; which is supposed the true reason why poor Lord Hervey spoke miserably. I beg your pardon, dear madam, for this long relation ; but 'tis impossible to be short on so copious a subject ; and you must own this action very well worthy of record, and I think not to be paralleled in history, ancient or modern."

Lady Mary, however, was less concerned with " the open door " for women in politics : her primary desire was that a woman should have the right, within reason, to live her own life, and not merely be a chattel of her husband. There is the conduct of her own married life to prove her sincerity.

Her view of the Turkish woman has already been given, as also has her opinion that marriages should be for the limited period of seven years. Now, she gave her opinion of the woman question in Italy, and it would seem that, realising that her own marriage has been anything but satisfactory to either party, she wrote from her heart.

" I cannot let pass in silence the prodigious alteration, since Misson's writing, in regard to our sex. This reformation (or, if you please, depravation) began so lately as the year 1732, when the French overran this part of Italy ; but it has been carried on with such fervour and success, that the Italian go far beyond their patterns, the Parisian ladies, in the extent of their liberty. I am not so much surprised at the women's conduct, as I am amazed at the change in the men's sentiments. Jealousy, which was once a point of honour among them, is exploded to that degree, it is the most infamous and ridiculous of all characters ; and you cannot more affront a gentleman than to

JOHN, LORD HERVEY OF ICKWORTH.

After the Portrait by Van Loo in the National Portrait Gallery.

p. 268.

suppose him capable of it. Divorces are also introduced, and frequent enough ; they have long been in fashion in Genoa ; several of the finest and greatest ladies there having two husbands alive. The constant pretext is impotency, to which the man often pleads guilty, and though he marries again, and has children by another wife, the plea remains good by saying he was so in regard to his first ; and when I told them that in England a complaint of that kind was esteemed so impudent no reasonable woman would submit to make it, I was answered we lived without religion, and that their consciences obliged them rather to strain a point of modesty than to live in a state of damnation. However, as this method is not without inconvenience (it being impracticable where there is children), they have taken another here : the husband deposes upon oath that he has had a commerce with his mother-in-law, on which the marriage is declared incestuous and nullified, though the children remain legitimate. You will think this hard on the old lady, who is scandalised ; but it is no scandal at all, nobody supposing it to be true, without circumstances to confirm it ; but the married couple are set free to their mutual content ; for I believe it would be difficult to get a sentence of divorce, if either side made opposition : at least I have heard no example of it."

Lady Mary made no secret of her views upon marriage ; and though she did not so frequently air her religious beliefs, she often pondered the subject, and when challenged to speak was not reticent. As regards sacred matters, she always had the courage of her convictions, even as she had in mundane affairs.

" I always, if possible, avoid controversial disputes : whenever I cannot do it, they are very short " (she wrote to her daughter in October, 1755). " I ask my adversary if he believes in the Scripture ? When that is answered affirmatively their church may be proved, by a child of ten years old,

contradictory to it, in their most important points. My second question is, if they think St. Peter and St. Paul knew the true Christian religion? The constant reply is, O yes. Then say I, purgatory, transubstantiation, invocation of saints, adoration of the Virgin, relics (of which they might have had a cartload), the observation of Lent, is no part of it, since they neither taught nor practised any of these things. Vows of celibacy are not more contrary to nature, than to the positive precept of St. Paul. He mentions a very common case, in which people are obliged, by conscience, to marry. No mortal can promise that case shall never be theirs, which depends on the disposition of the body as much as a fever; and 'tis as reasonable to engage never to feel the one as the other. He tells us, the marks of the Holy Spirit are charity, humility, truth, and long suffering. Can anything be more uncharitable than damning eternally so many millions for not believing what they never heard? or prouder than calling their head a Vice-god? Pious frauds are avowedly permitted, and persecution applauded: these maxims cannot be dictated by the spirit of peace, which is so warmly preached in the Gospel. The creeds of the apostles, and council of Nice, do not speak of the mass, or real presence, as articles of belief; and Athanasius asserts, whosoever believes according to them shall be saved. Jesus Christ, in answer to the lawyer, bids him love God above all things, and his neighbour as himself, as all that is necessary to salvation. When he describes the last judgment, he does not examine what sect, or what church, men were of, but how far they had been beneficent to mankind. Faith cannot determine reward or punishment, being involuntary, and only the consequence of conviction: we do not believe what we please, but what appears to us with the face of truth. As I do not mistake exclamation, invective, or ridicule for argument, I never recriminate on the lives of their popes and cardinals, when they urge the character of Henry the Eighth; I only answer, good actions are often done by all men through interested motives, and 'tis the common method of Providence to bring good out

of evil: history, both sacred and profane, furnishes many examples of it. When they tell me I have forsook the worship of my ancestors, I say I have had more ancestors heathen than Christian, and my faith is certainly ancienter than theirs, since I have added nothing to the practice of the primitive professors of Christianity. As to the prosperity or extent of the dominion of their church, which Cardinal Bellarmin counts among the proofs of its orthodoxy, the Mahometans, who have larger empires, and have made a quicker progress, have a better plea for the visible protection of Heaven. If the fopperies of their religion were only fopperies, they ought to be complied with, wherever it is established, like any ridiculous dress in fashion; but I think them impieties: their devotions are scandal to humanity from their nonsense; the mercenary deceits and barbarous tyranny of their ecclesiastics, inconsistent with moral honesty. If they object the diversity of our sects as a mark of reprobation, I desire them to consider, that objection has equal force against Christianity in general. When they thunder with the names of fathers and councils, they are surprised to find me as well (often better) acquainted with them than themselves. I show them the variety of their doctrines, their virulent contests and various factions, instead of that union they boast of. I have never been attacked a second time in any of the towns where I have resided, and perhaps shall never be so again after my last battle, which was with an old priest, a learned man, paticularly esteemed as a mathematician, and who has a head and heart as warm as poor Whiston's. When I first came hither, he visited me every day, and talked of me everywhere with such violent praise, that, had we been young people, God knows what would have been said. I have always the advantage of being quite calm on a subject which they cannot talk of without heat. He desired I would put on paper what I had said. I immediately wrote one side of a sheet, leaving the other for his answer. He carried it with him, promising to bring it the next day, since which time I have never seen it, though I have often demanded it, being

ashamed of my defective Italian. I fancy he sent it to his friend the Archbishop of Milan. I have given over asking for it, as a desperate debt. He still visits me, but seldom, and in a cold sort of a way. When I have found disputants I less respected, I have sometimes taken pleasure in raising their hopes by my concessions : they are charmed when I agree with them in the number of the sacraments ; but are horridly disappointed when I explain myself by saying the word sacrament is not to be found either in Old or New Testament ; and one must be very ignorant not to know it is taken from the listing oath of the Roman soldiers, and means nothing more than a solemn, irrevocable engagement. Parents vow, in infant baptism, to educate their children in the Christian religion, which they take upon themselves by confirmation ; the Lord's Supper is frequently renewing the same oath. Ordination and matrimony are solemn vows of a different kind : confession includes a vow of revealing all we know, and reforming what is amiss : extreme unction, the last vow, that we have lived in the faith we were baptised : in this sense they are all sacraments. As to the mysteries preached since, they were all invented long after, and some of them repugnant to the primitive institution."

CHAPTER XVI

ON THE CONTINENT (1745-1760)

Lady Mary stays at Avignon—She removes to Brescia—And then to Lovere—She abandons all idea of Montagu joining her abroad—Her house at Lovere—Her daily round—Her health—Her anxiety about her son—An amazing incident—A serious illness—A novel in a letter—Her correspondence attracts the attention of the Italian authorities—Sir James and Lady Frances Steuart—Politics—She is in the bad books of the British Resident at Venice—Lord Bute—The philosophy of Lady Mary—Letters to Lady Bute and Sir James Steuart.

LADY MARY liked Avignon so well that she stayed there until July 1746. Then she moved to Brescia, where she stayed for a year, and then took up her quarters at Lovere, a small place in Lombardy on the Lake d'Iseo, a most attractive spot, as she was at pains to tell her daughter at some length. For some time she alternated between Lovere and Brescia.

"I am now in a place the most beautifully romantic I ever saw in my life: it is the Tunbridge of this part of the world, to which I was sent by the doctor's order, my ague often returning, notwithstanding the loads of bark I have taken" (she wrote to her daughter from Lovere, July 24, 1747). "To say truth, I have no reason to repent my journey, though I was very unwilling to undertake it, it being forty miles, half by land and half by water; the land so stony I was almost shook to pieces, and I had the ill luck to be surprised with a storm on the lake, that if I had not been near a little port (where I passed a night in a very poor inn), the vessel must

have been lost. A fair wind brought me hither next morning early. I found a very good lodging, a great deal of good company, and a village in many respects resembling Tunbridge Wells, not only in the quality of the waters, which is the same, but in the manner of the buildings, most of the houses being separate at little distances, and all built on the sides of hills, which indeed are far different from those of Tunbridge, being six times as high : they are really vast rocks of different figures, covered with green moss, or short grass, diversified by tufts of trees, little woods, and here and there vineyards, but no other cultivation, except gardens like those on Richmond-hill. The whole lake, which is twenty-five miles long, and three broad, is all surrounded with these impassable mountains, the sides of which, towards the bottom, are so thick set with villages (and in most of them gentlemen's seats), that I do not believe there is anywhere above a mile distance one from another, which adds very much to the beauty of the prospect.

" We have an opera here, which is performed three times in the week. I was at it last night, and should have been surprised at the neatness of the scenes, goodness of the voices and justness of the actors, if I had not remembered I was in Italy. Several gentlemen jumped into the orchestra, and joined in the concert, which I suppose is one of the freedoms of the place, for I never saw it in any great town. I was yet more amazed (while the actors were dressing for the farce that concluded the entertainment) to see one of the principal among them, and as errant a *petit maitre* as if he had passed all his life at Paris, mount the stage, and present us with a cantata of his own performing. He had the pleasure of being almost deafened with applause. The ball began afterwards, but I was not witness of it, having accustomed myself to such early hours, that I was half asleep before the opera finished : it begins at ten o'clock, so that it was one before I could get to bed, though I had supped before I went, which is the custom.

" I am much better pleased with the diversions on the water, where all the town assembles every night, and never

without music; but we have none so rough as trumpets, kettle-drums, and French horns: they are all violins, lutes, mandolins, and flutes doux. Here is hardly a man that does not excel in some of these instruments, which he privately addresses to the lady of his affections, and the public has the advantage of it by his adding to the number of the musicians.

"The fountain where we drink the waters rises between two hanging hills, and is overshadowed with large trees, that give a freshness in the hottest time of the day. The provisions are all excellent, the fish of the lake being as large and well tasted as that of Geneva, and the mountains abounding in game, particularly blackcocks, which I never saw in any other part of Italy."

Lady Mary, though still corresponding with her husband, had clearly given up all idea of returning to England or of Montagu joining her abroad. She was quite content with her state, which, after all, so far as we know, was her own choice. She took a house at Lovere, and interested herself in improving it and developing the grounds.

"I have been these six weeks, and still am, at my dairy-house, which joins to my garden" (she wrote to her daughter in July, 1748). "I believe I have already told you it is a long mile from the castle, which is situated in the midst of a very large village, once a considerable town, part of the walls still remaining, and has not vacant ground enough about it to make a garden, which is my greatest amusement, it being now troublesome to walk, or even go in the chaise till the evening. I have fitted up in this farm-house a room for myself—that is to say, strewed the floor with rushes, covered the chimney with moss and branches, and adorned the room with basins of earthenware (which is made here to great perfection) filled with flowers, and put in some straw chairs, and a couch bed, which is my whole furniture. This spot of ground is so beautiful, I am afraid you will scarce credit the description, which, however, I

can assure you, shall be very literal, without any embellishment from imagination. It is on a bank, forming a kind of peninsula, raised from the river Oglio fifty feet, to which you may descend by easy stairs cut in the turf, and either take the air on the river, which is as large as the Thames at Richmond, or by walking [in] an avenue two hundred yards on the side of it, you find a wood of a hundred acres, which was all ready cut into walks and ridings when I took it. I have only added fifteen bowers in different views, with seats of turf. They were easily made, here being a large quantity of underwood, and a great number of wild vines, which twist to the top of the highest trees, and from which they make a very good sort of wine they call *brusco*. I am now writing to you in one of these arbours, which is so thickly shaded, the sun is not troublesome, even at noon. Another is on the side of the river, where I have made a camp kitchen, that I may take the fish, dress, and eat it immediately, and at the same time see the barks, which ascend or descend every day to or from Mantua, Guastalla, or Pont de Vie, all considerable towns. This little wood is carpeted, in their succeeding seasons, with violets and strawberries, inhabited by a nation of nightingales, and filled with game of all kinds, excepting deer and wild boar, the first being unknown here, and not being large enough for the other.

" My garden was a plain vineyard when it came into my hands not two years ago, and it is, with a small expense, turned into a garden that (apart from the advantage of the climate) I like better than that of Kensington. The Italian vineyards are not planted like those in France, but in clumps, fastened to trees planted in equal ranks (commonly fruit-trees), and continued in festoons from one to another, which I have turned into covered galleries of shade, that I can walk in the heat without being incommoded by it. I have made a dining-room of verdure, capable of holding a table of twenty covers ; the whole ground is three hundred and seventeen feet in length, and two hundred in breadth. You see it is far from large ; but so prettily disposed (though I say it), that I never saw a more

agreeable rustic garden, abounding with all sort of fruit, and produces a variety of wines. I would send you a piece [*sic*] if I did not fear the customs would make you pay too dear for it."

Lady Mary was now in her sixtieth year, and asked for nothing better than peace and comfort. Her manner of life she described as being as regular as that of any monastery. She rose at six, and after an early breakfast worked in the garden. Then she visited the dairy and inspected her chickens—at one time she had two hundred of them—and her turkeys, geese, ducks, and peacocks, her bees and her silkworms. At eleven she read for an hour, and after an early dinner would take a siesta. Then she played picquet or whist with some friendly priests. In the evening she walked in the woods, or rode, or went on the lake. "I enjoy every amusement that solitude can afford," she said. "I confess I sometimes wish for a little conversation, but I reflect that the commerce of the world gives more uneasiness than pleasure, and quiet is all the hope that can reasonably be indulged at my age." It would not have been Lady Mary if she had not kept a keen eye on the pence. She was delighted to be able to say in relation to her house and grounds that "all things have hitherto prospered under my care; my bees and silkworms are doubled, and I am told that, without accidents, my capital will be so in two years' time." She enjoyed the more her evening now and her fish at dinner, because neither cost her anything. "The fishery of this part of the river belongs to me; and my fisherman's little boat (where I have a green lutestring awning) serves me for a barge. He and his sons are my rowers without expense, he being very well paid by the profit of the fish, which I give him on condition of having every day one dish for my table."

Age dealt gently with Lady Mary. At the age of sixty-two, she could say that her hearing and her memory were good, and her sight better than she had any right to expect. She had appetite enough to relish what she ate, slept as soundly as she

had ever done, and had never a headache. Still, the fact was forced upon her that she was no longer so young as she had been —which unpleasing reflection she accepted philosophically enough.

"I no more expect to arrive at the age of the Duchess of Marlborough * than to that of Methusalem; neither do I desire it" (she wrote to Lady Bute in the early spring of 1751). "I have long thought myself useless to the world. I have seen one generation pass away; and it is gone; for I think there are very few of those left that flourished in my youth. You will perhaps call these melancholy reflections: they are not so. There is a quiet after the abandoning of pursuits, something like the rest that follows a laborious day. I tell you this for your comfort. It was formerly a terrifying view to me, that I should one day be an old woman. I now find that Nature has provided pleasures for every state. Those are only unhappy who will not be contented with what she gives, but strive to break through her laws, by affecting a perpetuity of youth which appears to me as little desirable at present as the babies do to you, that were the delight of your infancy."

She reverted to the same subject when writing to her husband a month or two later:

"I can no longer resist the desire I have to know what is become of my son. I have long suppressed it, from a belief that if there was anything of good to be told, you would not fail to give me the pleasure of hearing it. I find it now grows so much upon me, that whatever I am to know, I think it would be easier for me to support, than the anxiety I suffer from my doubts. I beg to be informed, and prepare myself for the worst, with all the philosophy I have. At my time of life I ought to be detached from a world which I am soon to leave;

* The Duchess of Marlborough was born on May 29, 1660, and died on October 18, 1744.

to be totally so is a vain endeavour, and perhaps there is vanity in the endeavour : while we are human, we must submit to human infirmities, and suffer them in mind as well as body. All that reflection and experience can do is to mitigate, we can never extinguish, our passions. I call by that name every sentiment that is not founded upon reason, and own I cannot justify to mine the concern I feel for one who never gave me any view of satisfaction.

" This is too melancholy a subject to dwell upon. You compliment me on the continuation of my spirits : 'tis true, I try to maintain them by every art I can, being sensible of the terrible consequences of losing them. Young people are too apt to let theirs sink on any disappointment."

There was, in 1751, some extraordinary incident in the life of Lady Mary, the true history of which has never been made public.

" Pray tell me," Horace Walpole wrote to Sir Horace Mann on August 31 of that year, " if you know anything of Lady Mary Wortley : we have an obscure history here of her being in durance in the Brescian or the Bergamasco : that a young fellow that she set out with keeping has taken it into his head to keep her close prisoner, not permitting her to write or receive any letters but which he sees : he seems determined, if her husband should die, not to lose her, as the Count [Richcourt] did Lady Oxford."

No reply to this letter reached Walpole, but his insatiable curiosity would not accept this as a check, and he wrote again on October 14 : " Did you ever receive the question I asked you about Lady Mary Wortley's being confined by a lover that she keeps somewhere in the Brescian ? I long to know the particulars."

At the time of this incident Lady Mary was in her sixty-second year. It is possible, but extremely improbable,

therefore, that Lady Mary should have taken a young man into keeping. Horace Walpole may always be trusted to make the best of a rumour. Still, it may be stated, on the authority of Wright, that among Lady Mary's papers there was found a long account of the matter, written in Italian. In this she mentioned that for some time she had been forcibly detained in a country house belonging to an Italian Count and occupied by him and his mother. This paper, it is further mentioned, seems to have been submitted to a lawyer for his opinion or for production in a court of law. It may be, of course, that Lady Mary did, to some extent, adopt the young man, who thought that by keeping possession of her person he might be able to extort money from her.

Not long after this business, in fact, in February, 1752, Lady Mary was reporting that she was well enough in health. She had been reading Coventry's *Pompey the Little*, and tells her daughter that she saw herself in the character of Mrs. Qualmsick :

" You will be surprised at this, no Englishwoman being so free from vapours, having never in my life complained of low spirits or weak nerves ; but our resemblance is very strong in the fancied loss of appetite, which I have been silly enough to be persuaded into by the physician of this place. He visits me frequently, as being one of the most considerable men in the parish, and is a grave, sober thinking great fool, whose solemn appearance, and deliberate way of delivering his sentiments gives them an air of good sense, though they are often the most injudicious that ever were pronounced. By perpetual telling me I eat so little, he is amazed I am able to subsist, he had brought me to be of his opinion ; and I began to be seriously uneasy at it. This useful treatise has roused me into a recollection of what I eat yesterday, and do almost every day the same. I wake generally about seven, and drink half a pint of warm asses' milk, after which I sleep two hours ; as soon as I am risen, I constantly take three cups of milk coffee, and

two hours after that a large cup of milk chocolate : two hours more brings my dinner, where I never fail swallowing a good dish (I don't mean plate) of gravy soup, with all the bread, roots, &c., belonging to it. I then eat a wing and the whole body of a large fat capon, and a veal sweetbread, concluding with a competent quantity of custard, and some roasted chestnuts. At five in the afternoon I take another dose of asses' milk ; and for supper twelve chestnuts (which would weigh twenty-four of those in London), one new laid egg, and a handsome porringer of white bread and milk. With this diet, notwithstanding the menaces of my wise doctor, I am now convinced I am in no danger of starving ; and am obliged to Little Pompey for this discovery."

Two years later, however, when she was in her sixty-fifth year, Lady Mary found herself far from well. In April of that year, she told her daughter : " My time is wholly dedicated to the care of a decaying body, and endeavouring, as the old song says, to grow wiser and better, as my strength wears away." Shortly after, she was taken seriously unwell at Gottolengo. When she had recovered she, always interested in medical science, sent Lady Bute a full account of her illness and of the extraordinary physician from the neighbouring village of Lovere.

" Soon after I wrote my last letter to my dear child, I was seized with so violent a fever, accompanied with so many bad symptoms, my life was despaired of by the physician of Gottolengo, and I prepared myself for death with as much resignation as that circumstance admits : some of my neighbours without my knowledge, sent express for the doctor of this place, whom I have mentioned to you formerly as having uncommon secrets. I was surprised to see him at my bedside. He declared me in great danger, but did not doubt my recovery, if I was wholly under his care ; and his first prescription was transporting me hither ; the other physician asserted positively

I should die on the road. It has always been my opinion that it is a matter of the utmost indifference where we expire, and I consented to be removed. My bed was placed on a bancard ; my servants followed in chaises ; and in this equipage I set out. I bore the first day's journey of fifteen miles without any visible alteration. The doctor said, as I was not worse, I was certainly better ; and the next day proceeded twenty miles to Iséo, which is at the head of this lake. I lay each night at noblemen's houses, which were empty. My cook, with my physician, aways preceded two or three hours, and I found my chamber, with all necessaries, ready prepared with the exactest attention. I was put into a bark in my litter bed, and in three hours arrived here. My spirits were not at all wasted (I think rather raised) by the fatigue of my journey. I drank the water next morning, and, with a few doses of my physician's prescription, in three days found myself in perfect health, which appeared almost a miracle to all that saw me. You may imagine I am willing to submit to the orders of one that I must acknowledge the instrument of saving my life, though they are not entirely conformable to my will and pleasure. He has sentenced me to a long continuance here, which, he says, is absolutely necessary to the confirmation of my health, and would persuade me that my illness has been wholly owing to my omission of drinking the waters these two years past. I dare not contradict him, and must own he deserves (from the various surprising cures I have seen) the name given to him in this country of the miraculous man. Both his character and practice are so singular, I cannot forbear giving you some account of them. He will not permit his patients to have either surgeon or apothecary : he performs all the operations of the first with great dexterity ; and whatever compounds he gives, he makes in his own house : those are very few ; the juice of herbs, and these waters, being commonly his sole prescriptions. He has very little learning, and professes drawing all his knowledge from experience, which he possesses, perhaps, in a greater degree than any other mortal, being the seventh doctor of his

family in a direct line. His forefathers have all of them left journals and registers solely for the use of their posterity, none of them having published anything ; and he has recourse to these manuscripts on every difficult case, the veracity of which, at least, is unquestionable. His vivacity is prodigious, and he is indefatigable in his industry : but what most distinguishes him is a disinterestedness I never saw in any other : he is as regular in his attendance on the poorest peasant, from whom he never can receive one farthing, as on the richest of the nobility ; and, whenever he is wanted, will climb three or four miles in the mountains, in the hottest sun, or heaviest rain, where a horse cannot go, to arrive at a cottage, where, if their condition requires it, he does not only give them advice and medicines gratis, but bread, wine, and whatever is needful. There never passes a week without one or more of these expeditions. His last visit is generally to me. I often see him as dirty and tired as a foot post, having eat nothing all day but a roll or two that he carries in his pocket, yet blest with such a perpetual flow of spirits, he is always gay to a degree above cheerfulness. There is a peculiarity in his character that I hope will incline you to forgive my drawing it."

It was probably by the advice of her physician that Lady Mary decided to make Lovere her headquarters. He prescribed taking the waters there and a long rest. Lovere was a dull place, visitors coming only during the water-drinking season. The plague that overran Europe in 1626 had ravaged it : the poor were almost destroyed, and the rich deserted it. A few of the ancient palaces had been turned into lodging-houses ; the rest were in ruinous condition. Lady Mary bought one of the palaces.

" I see you lift up your eyes in wonder at my indiscretion. I beg you to hear my reasons before you condemn me. In my infirm state of health the unavoidable noise of a public lodging is very disagreeable ; and here is no private one : secondly, and

chiefly, the whole purchase is but one hundred pounds, with a very pretty garden in terraces down to the water, and a court behind the house. It is founded on a rock, and the walls so thick, they will probably remain as long as the earth. It is true, the apartments are in most tattered circumstances, without doors or windows. The beauty of the great saloon gained my affection : it is forty-two feet in length by twenty-five, proportionably high, opening into a balcony of the same length, with marble balusters : the ceiling and flooring are in good repair, but I have been forced to the expense of covering the wall with new stucco ; and the carpenter is at this minute taking measure of the windows, in order to make frames for sashes. The great stairs are in such a declining way, it would be a very hazardous exploit to mount them : I never intend to attempt it. The state bedchamber shall also remain for the sole use of the spiders that have taken possession of it, along with the grand cabinet, and some other pieces of magnificence, quite useless to me, and which would cost a great deal to make habitable. I have fitted up six rooms, with lodgings for five servants, which are all I ever will have in this place ; and I am persuaded that I could make a profit if I would part with my purchase, having been very much befriended in the sale, which was by auction, the owner having died without children, and I believe he had never seen this mansion in his life, it having stood empty from the death of his grandfather. The governor bid for me, and nobody would bid against him. Thus I am become a citizen of Lovere, to the great joy of the inhabitants, not (as they would pretend) from their respect for my person, but I perceive they fancy I shall attract all the travelling English ; and, to say the truth, the singularity of the place is well worth their curiosity ; but, as I have no correspondents, I may be buried here fifty years, and nobody know anything of the matter."

Lady Mary found great pleasure in her correspondence. It was one of the occupations with which she solaced her

loneliness, and she was never more happy than when she had an exciting story to set down, for she could set it down with the ease of a Walpole and an individual touch that was all her own :

" I was quietly reading in my closet, when I was interrupted by the chambermaid of the Signora Laura Bono, who flung herself at my feet, and, in an agony of sobs and tears, begged me, for the love of the holy Madonna, to hasten to her master's house, where the two brothers would certainly murder one another, if my presence did not stop their fury. I was very much surprised, having always heard them spoke of as a pattern of fraternal union. However, I made all possible speed thither, without staying for hoods or attendance. I was soon there (the house touching my garden wall), and was directed to the bedchamber by the noise of oaths and execrations ; but, on opening the door, was astonished to a degree you may better guess than I describe, by seeing the Signora Laura prostrate on the ground, melting in tears, and her husband standing with a drawn stiletto in his hand, swearing she should never see to-morrow's sun. I was soon let into the secret. The good man, having business of consequence at Brescia, went thither early in the morning ; but, as he expected his chief tenant to pay his rent that day, he left orders with his wife, that if the farmer, who lived two miles off, came himself, or sent any of his sons, she should take care to make him very welcome. She obeyed him with great punctuality, the money coming in the hand of a handsome lad of eighteen : she did not only admit him to her own table, and produce the best wine in the cellar, but resolved to give him *chère entière*. While she was exercising this generous hospitality, the husband met midway the gentleman he intended to visit, who was posting to another side of the country ; they agreed on another appointment, and he returned to his own house, where, giving his horse to be led round to the stable by the servant that accompanied him, he opened his door with the *passe-partout* key, and proceeded to his chamber, without meeting anybody,

where he found his beloved spouse asleep on the bed with her gallant. The opening of the door waked them : the young fellow immediately leaped out of the window, which looked into the garden, and was open, it being summer, and escaped over the fields, leaving his breeches on a chair by the bedside—a very striking circumstance. In short, the case was such, I do not think the queen of fairies herself could have found an excuse, though Chaucer tells us she has made a solemn promise to leave none of her sex unfurnished with one, to all eternity. As to the poor criminal, she had nothing to say for herself but what I dare swear you will hear from your youngest daughter, if ever you catch her stealing of sweetmeats—'Pray, pray, she would do so no more, and indeed it was the first time.' This last article found no credit with me : I cannot be persuaded that any woman who had lived virtuous till forty (for such is her age) could suddenly be endowed with such consummate impudence, to solicit a youth at first sight, there being no probability, his age and station considered, that he would have made any attempt of that kind. I must confess I was wicked enough to think the unblemished reputation she had hitherto maintained, and did not fail to put us in mind of, was owing to a series of such frolics ; and to say truth, they are the only amours that can reasonably hope to remain undiscovered. Ladies that can resolve to make love thus *extempore*, may pass unobserved, especially if they can content themselves with low life, where fear may oblige their favourites to secrecy : there wants only a very lewd constitution, a very bad heart, and a moderate understanding, to make this conduct easy : and I do not doubt it has been practised by many prudes beside her I am now speaking of. You may be sure I did not communicate these reflections. The first word I spoke was to desire Signor Carlo to sheathe his poniard, not being pleased with its glittering : he did so very readily, begging my pardon for not having done it on my first appearance, saying he did not know what he did, and indeed he had the countenance and gesture of a man distracted. I did not endeavour a defence ; that seemed

to me impossible ; but represented to him, as well as I could, the crime of a murder, which, if he could justify before men, was still a crying sin before God ; the disgrace he would bring on himself and posterity, and irreparable injury he would do his eldest daughter, a pretty girl of fifteen, that I knew he was extremely fond of. I added, that if he thought it proper to part from his lady, he might easily find a pretext for it some months hence ; and that it was as much his interest as hers to conceal this affair from the knowledge of the world. I could not presently make him taste these reasons, and was forced to stay there near five hours (almost from five to ten at night) before I durst leave them together, which I would not do till he had sworn in the most serious manner he would make no future attempt on her life. I was content with his oath, knowing him to be very devout, and found I was not mistaken. How the matter was made up between them afterwards I know not ; but it is now two years since it happened, and all appearances remaining as if it had never been. The secret is in very few hands ; his brother, being at that time at Brescia, I believe knows nothing of it to this day. The chambermaid and myself have preserved the strictest silence, and the lady retains the satisfaction of insulting all her acquaintance on the foundation of a spotless character, that only she can boast in the parish, where she is most heartily hated, from these airs of impertinent virtue, and another very essential reason, being the best dressed woman among them, though one of the plainest in her figure.

" The discretion of the chambermaid in fetching me, which possibly saved her mistress's life, and her taciturnity since, I fancy appear very remarkable to you, and is what would certainly never happen in England. The first part of her behaviour deserves great praise ; coming of her own accord, and inventing so decent an excuse for her admittance : but her silence may be attributed to her knowing very well that any servant that presumes to talk of his master will most certainly be incapable of talking at all in a short time, their lives being

entirely in the power of their superiors : I do not mean by law but by custom, which has full as much force. If one of them was killed, it would either never be inquired into at all, or very slightly passed over ; yet it seldom happens, and I know no instance of it, which I think is owing to the great submission of domestics, who are sensible of their dependence, and the national temper not being hasty, and never inflamed by wine, drunkenness being a vice abandoned to the vulgar, and spoke of with greater detestation than murder, which is mentioned with as little concern as a drinking-bout in England, and is almost as frequent. It was extreme shocking to me at my first coming, and still gives me a sort of horror, though custom has in some degree familiarised it to my imagination. Robbery would be pursued with great vivacity, and punished with the utmost rigour, therefore is very rare, though stealing is in daily practice ; but as all the peasants are suffered the use of fire-arms, the slightest provocation is sufficient to shoot, and they see one of their own species lie dead before them with as little remorse as a hare or a partridge, and, when revenge spurs them on, with much more pleasure. A dissertation on this subject would engage me in a discourse not proper for the post."

Lady Mary, being a prolific letter-writer, came under the suspicions of the Italian authorities, who carefully examined the correspondence—a fact that was only by a chance conversation revealed to her. " I think I now know why our correspondence is so miserably interrupted, and so many of my letters lost to and from England," she wrote to her husband in October, 1753 ; " but I am no happier in the discovery than a man who has found out his complaints proceed from a stone in the kidneys ; I know the cause, but am entirely ignorant of the remedy, and must suffer my uneasiness with what patience I can."

" An old priest made me a visit as I was folding my last packet to my daughter. Observing it to be large, he told me I had done a great deal of business that morning. I made

answer, I had done no business at all ; I had only wrote to my daughter on family affairs, or such trifles as make up women's conversation. He said gravely, people like your Excellenza do not use to write long letters upon trifles. I assured him, that if he understood English, I would let him read my letter. He replied, with a mysterious smile, if I did understand English, I should not understand what you have written, except you would give me the key, which I durst not presume to ask. What key ? (said I, staring) there is not one cypher besides the date. He answered, cyphers were only used by novices in politics, and it was very easy to write intelligibly, under feigned names of persons and places, to a correspondent, in such a manner as should be almost impossible to be understood by anybody else.

" Thus I suppose my innocent epistles are severely scrutinised : and when I talk of my grandchildren, they are fancied to represent all the potentates of Europe. This is very provoking. I confess there are good reasons for extraordinary caution at this juncture ; but 'tis very hard I cannot pass for being as insignificant as I really am."

Lady Mary clearly was happy in Italy, and did not in the least hanker after the delights of London society, which in her earlier days she had so much enjoyed.

" By the account you give me of London, I think it very much reformed ; at least you have one sin the less, and it was a very reigning one in my time, I mean scandal : it must be literally reduced to a whisper, since the custom of living all together. I hope it has also banished the fashion of talking all at once, which was very prevailing when I was in town, and may perhaps contribute to brotherly love and unity, which was so much declined in my memory, that it was hard to invite six people that would not, by cold looks, or piquing reflections affront one another. I suppose parties are at an end, though I fear it is the consequence of the old almanac prophecy,

" Poverty brings peace " ; and I fancy you really follow the French mode, and the lady keeps an assembly, that the assembly may keep the lady, and card money pay for clothes and equipage as well as cards and candles. I find I should be as solitary in London as I am here in the country, it being impossible for me to submit to live in a *drum*, which I think so far from a cure of uneasiness, that it is, in my opinion, adding one more to the heap. There are so many attached to humanity, 'tis impossible to fly from them all ; but experience has confirmed to me what I always thought), that the pursuit of pleasure will be ever attended with pain, and the study of ease be most certainly accompanied with pleasures. I have had this morning as much delight in a walk in the sun as ever I felt formerly in the crowded Mall, even when I imagined I had my share of the admiration of the place, which was generally soured before I slept by the informations of my female friends, who seldom failed to tell me, it was observed, I had showed an inch above my shoe-heels, or some other criticism of equal weight, which was construed affectation, and utterly destroyed all the satisfaction my vanity had given me. I have now no other but in my little houswifery, which is easily gratified in this country, where, by the help of my receipt-book, I make a very shining figure among my neighbours, by the introduction of custards, cheese-cakes, and minced pies, which were entirely unknown to these parts, and are received with universal applause ; and I have reason to believe will preserve my memory even to future ages, particularly by the art of butter-making, in which I have so improved them, that they now make as good as in any part of England."

Lady Mary made the acquaintance in 1758 of Sir James Steuart,* and his wife, Lady Frances, the eldest daughter of the Earl of Wemyss and sister of the Jacobite Lord Elcho. Steuart,

* Sir James Steuart (1712-1780), in 1773, on inheriting an estate from a relative, took the additional surname of Denham. He was the author of works on currency and political economy.

when making the grand tour, had met the exiled Stuarts at Rome, and had become attached to their cause. When the Young Pretender landed in Scotland in 1745, Steuart threw in his lot with him. On his master's business he went to Paris, and was abroad when Culloden was fought. When an Act of Oblivion was passed in 1748 he was exempted by name, and, therefore, his return was at the time impossible. He and his wife wandered about the Continent, and it was at Venice that they encountered Lady Mary, who was delighted with them. "I was charmed to find a man of uncommon sense and learning, and a lady that without beauty is more admirable than the fairest of her sex," she wrote enthusiastically to her daughter. "I offered them all the little good offices in my power, and invited them to supper; upon which our wise Minister * has discovered that I am in the interest of popery and slavery. As he has often said the same thing of Mr. Pitt, it would give me no mortification, if I did not apprehend that his fertile imagination may support this wise idea by such circumstances as may influence those that do not know me. It is very remarkable that after having suffered all the rage of that party at Avignon for my attachment to the present reigning family, I should be accused here of favouring rebellion, when I hoped all our odious diversions were forgotten."

Lady Mary was anxious that nothing she did should reflect upon her daughter or in any way affect Lord Bute. "I am afraid you may think some imprudent behaviour of mine has occasioned all this ridiculous persecution [by the Resident]" she wrote to them in May, 1758. "I can assure you I have always treated him and his family with the utmost civility, and am now retired to Padua, to avoid the comments that will certainly be made on his extraordinary conduct towards me. I only desire privacy and quiet, and am very well contented to be without visits, which oftener disturb than amuse me. My single concern is the design he has formed of securing (as he

* The British Resident at Venice at this time was John Murray.

calls it) my effects immediately on my decease ; if they ever fall into his hands, I am persuaded they will never arrive entire into yours, which is a very uneasy thought to me."

Although not primarily interested in politics, Lady Mary had met so many politicians that she was naturally eager to hear what was going on, and the fact that her son-in-law, Lord Bute, was active in that department of life made her follow ministerial events in England so closely as possible. " I stay here, though I am on many accounts better pleased with Padua," she wrote to her daughter from Venice, January 20, 1758. " Our great minister, the Resident, treats me as one of the Opposition. I am inclined to laugh rather than be displeased at his political airs ; yet, as I am among strangers they are disagreeable ; and, could I have foreseen them, would have settled in some other part of the world : but I have taken leases of my houses, been at much pains and expense in furnishing them, and am no longer of an age to make long journeys."

Pitt's Coalition Ministry, formed in June, 1757, in which Pitt and Lord Holdernesse were Secretaries of State, the Duke of Newcastle First Lord of the Treasury, Legge Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Lord Granville, Lord Temple, Sir Robert Henley, the Duke of Devonshire, the Duke of Bedford, and Henry Fox held office, moved Lady Mary to merriment.

" Your account of the changes in ministerial affairs do not surprise me ; but nothing could be more astonishing than their all coming together " (she wrote to Lady Bute). " It puts me in mind of a friend of mine who had a large family of favourite animals ; and not knowing how to convey them to his country-house in separate equipages, he ordered a Dutch mastiff, a cat and her kittens, a monkey, and a parrot, all to be packed up together in one large hamper, and sent by a waggon. One may easily guess how this set of company made their journey ; and I have never been able to think of the present compound ministry without the idea of barking, scratching, and screaming. 'Tis too ridiculous a one, I own, for the gravity of their characters,

and still more for the situation the kingdom is in; for as much as one may encourage the love of laughter, 'tis impossible to be indifferent to the welfare of one's native country."

The Resident was, so far as Lady Mary was concerned, an ill-conditioned fellow. She asked him once or twice for the English papers, but the reply made, with intention, on each occasion was that they were engaged. "Since the Ministry of Mr. Pitt," she remarked, "he is so desirous to signalise his zeal for the contrary faction, he is perpetually saying ridiculous things, to manifest his attachment; and as he looks upon me (nobody knows why) to be the friend of a man I never saw, he has not visited me once this winter. The misfortune is not great." Lady Mary was amused at being mistaken for a politician. "I have often been so, though I ever thought politics so far removed from my sphere. I cannot accuse myself of dabbling in them, even when I heard them talked over in all companies; but, as the old song says,

> 'Tho' through the wide world we should range,
> 'Tis in vain from our fortune to fly.'"

Lady Mary always cherished affection and respect for her son-in-law, Lord Bute. He had been since 1747 a favourite with Frederick, Prince of Wales, who in 1750 appointed him a Lord of his Bedchamber. When Frederick died in the following year Bute had established his popularity with the Princess, who, in 1756, secured his appointment as Groom of the Stole. "I have something to mention that I believe will be agreeable to you," Edward Wortley Montagu wrote to his wife at this time; "I mean some particulars relating to Lord Bute. He stood higher in the Prince of Wales's favour than any man. His attendance was frequent at Leicester House, where this young Prince has resided, and since his father's death has continued without intermission, till new officers were to be placed under him. It is said that another person was to be Groom of

the Stole, but that the Prince's earnest request was complied with in my Lord's favour. It is supposed that the governors, preceptors, etc., who were about him before will now be set aside, and that my Lord is now the principal adviser." Neither Montagu nor his wife in their published correspondence make any allusion to the scandal current about the intimate relations of the Princess and Lord Bute, though it was so widely spread it is almost impossible it should not have come to the ears of one or other of them.

On the accession of George III Bute was sworn a member of the Privy Council, and in November, 1760, appointed Groom of the Stole and First Gentleman of the Bedchamber. His influence with the young King was paramount. " I pity Lady Bute," Walpole wrote to Sir Horace Mann on January 27, 1761, " her mother will sell to whoever does not know her, all kinds of promises and reversions, bestow lies gratis and wholesale, and make so much mischief, that they will be forced to discard her in three months, which will go to Lady Bute's heart, who is one of the best and most sensible women in the world ; and who, educated by such a mother, has never made a false step." As a matter of fact, the only request known to be made by Lady Mary was to ask Lord Bute, through her daughter, to take care that Sir James Steuart's name was not excluded in the Act of Indemnity. It is, however, true that there is the following statement in the Diaries of the Right Hon. William Windham, under the date of November 25, 1772, which is given here for what it is worth. " Mr. Montagu told me this evening about Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, that at her death, ' A note of his was found among her papers for one thousand guineas,' which had been given her by a gentleman of Ireland as the premium for some honours to be received through her interest. The honours stipulated for were not obtained before her death, and the gentleman upon representation of the story to the family recovered the note which she had deposited by agreement in a particular drawer shewn to him. It may reasonably be supposed that this was not the first instance of her accepting money

on those conditions, and that much of Lord Bute's interest has been employed in her service."

As Lady Mary advanced in the sixties of her life, she looked upon the world with the eyes of a vast experience, and found it more sad than she had thought it in youth or middle age. *Vanitas vanitatum* was the text of many a homily that she delivered, and a certain sadness replaced the sense of malice that had once possessed her. Once more than aggressive, now she had had bestowed upon her in some degree that gift of understanding that engenders sympathy. As she grew older she grew more wise, and was anxious to impart her wisdom, especially to her daughter, for her benefit or for that of her daughter's children.

" How important is the charge of youth ! and how useless all the advantages of nature and fortune without a well-turned mind ! I have lately heard of a very shining instance of this truth, from two gentlemen (very deserving ones they seem to be) who have had the curiosity to travel into Moscovy, and now return to England with Mr. Archer. I inquired after my old acquaintance Sir Charles [Hanbury] Williams, who I hear is much broken, both in spirits and constitution. How happy that man might have been, if there had been added to his natural and acquired endowments a dash of morality ! If he had known how to distinguish between false and true felicity ; and, instead of seeking to increase an estate already too large, and hunting after pleasures that have made him rotten and ridiculous, he had bounded his desires of wealth, and follow the dictates of his conscience. His servile ambition has gained him two yards of red ribbon, and an exile into a miserable country, where there is no society and so little taste, that I believe he suffers under a dearth of flatterers. This is said for the use of your growing sons, whom I hope no golden temptations will induce to marry women they cannot love, or comply with measures they do not approve. All the happiness

this world can afford is more within reach than is generally supposed. Whoever seeks pleasure will undoubtedly find pain ; whoever will pursue ease will as certainly find pleasures. The world's esteem is the highest gratification of human vanity ; and that is more easily obtained in a moderate fortune than an overgrown one, which is seldom possessed, never gained, without envy. I say esteem ; for, as to applause, it is a youthful pursuit, never to be forgiven after twenty, and naturally succeeds the childish desire of catching the setting sun, which I can remember running very hard to do : a fine thing truly if it could be caught ; but experience soon shows it to be impossible. A wise and honest man lives to his own heart, without that silly splendour that makes him a prey to knaves, and which commonly ends in his becoming one of the fraternity. I am very glad to hear Lord Bute's decent economy sets him above anything of that kind. I wish it may become national. A collective body of men differs very little from a single man ; frugality is the foundation of generosity. I have often been complimented on the English heroism, who have thrown away so many millions, without any prospect of advantage to themselves, purely to succour a distressed princess. I never could hear these praises without some impatience ; they sounded to me like panegyrics made by the dependents on the Duke of Newcastle and poor Lord Oxford, bubbled when they were commended, and laughed at when undone. Some late events will, I hope, open our eyes : we shall see we are an island, and endeavour to extend our commerce rather than the Quixote reputation of redressing wrongs and placing diadems on heads that should be equally indifferent to us. When time has ripened mankind into common sense, the name of conqueror will be an odious title. I could easily prove that, had the Spaniards established a trade with the Americans, they would have enriched their country more than by the addition of twenty-two kingdoms, and all the mines they now work—I do not say possess ; since, though they are the proprietors, others enjoy the profit."

Lady Mary's letters at this period of her life are so entertaining that a few may well be inserted here for the sheer pleasure of reading them.

To the Countess of Bute

"Padua, September 30, 1757.

"Lord Bute has been so obliging as to let me know your safe delivery, and the birth of another daughter; may she be as meritorious in your eyes as you are in mine! I can wish nothing better to you both, though I have some reproaches to make you. Daughter! daughter! don't call names; you are always abusing my pleasures, which is what no mortal will bear. Trash, lumber, sad stuff, are the titles you give to my favourite amusement. If I called a white staff a stick of wood, a gold key gilded brass, and the ensigns of illustrious orders coloured strings, this may be philosophically true, but would be very ill received. We have all our playthings: happy are they that can be contented with those they can obtain: those hours are spent in the wisest manner, that can easiest shade the ills of life, and are lest productive of ill consequences. I think my time better employed in reading the adventures of imaginary people, than the Duchess of Marlborough's, who passed the latter years of her life in paddling with her will, and contriving schemes of plaguing some, and extracting praise from others, to no purpose; eternally disappointed, and eternally fretting. The active scenes are over at my age. I indulge, with all the art I can, my taste for reading. If I would confine it to valuable books, they are almost as rare as valuable men. I must be content with what I can find. As I approach a second childhood, I endeavour to enter into the pleasures of it. Your youngest son is, perhaps, at this very moment riding on a poker with great delight, not at all regretting that it is not a gold one, and much less wishing it an Arabian horse, which he would not know how to manage. I am reading an idle tale, not expecting wit or truth in it, and am very glad it is not metaphysics to puzzle my judgment, or history to mislead my opinion

He fortifies his health by exercise ; I calm my cares by oblivion. The methods may appear low to busy people ; but, if he improves his strength, and I forget my infirmities, we attain very desirable ends."

To the Countess of Bute

" Venice, November 8, 1758.

" . . . Some few months before Lord W. Hamilton married, there appeared a foolish song, said to be wrote by a poetical great lady, who I really think was the character of Lady Arabella, in *The Female Quixote* (without the beauty) : you may imagine such a conduct, at court, made her superlatively ridiculous. Lady Delawarr, a woman of great merit, with whom I lived in much intimacy, showed this fine performance to me : we were very merry in supposing what answer Lord William would make to these passionate addresses ; she begged me to say something for a poor man, who had nothing to say for himself. I wrote, *extempore*, on the back of the song, some stanzas that went perfectly well to the tune. She promised they should never appear as mine, and faithfully kept her word. By what accident they have fallen into the hands of that thing Dodsley, I know not, but he has printed them as addressed, by me, to a very contemptible puppy, and my own words as his answer. I do not believe either Job or Socrates ever had such a provocation. You will tell me, it cannot hurt me with any acquaintance I ever had : it is true ; but it is an excellent piece of scandal for the same sort of people that propagate, with success, that your nurse left her estate, husband, and family, to go with me to England ; and, then I turned her to starve, after defrauding her of God knows what. I thank God witches are out of fashion, or I should expect to have it deposed, by several credible witnesses, that I had been seen flying through the air on a broomstick, &c. I am really sick with vexation."

MARY, COUNTESS OF BUTE.

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To Sir James Steuart

" Venice, November 14, 1758.

" This letter will be solely to you, and I desire you will not communicate it to Lady Fanny : she is the best woman in the world, and I would by no means make her uneasy ; but there will be such strange things in it that the Talmud or the Revelations are not half so mysterious : what these prodigies portend, God knows ; but I never should have suspected half the wonders I see before my eyes, and am convinced of the necessity of the repeal of the witch act (as it is commonly called), I mean, to speak correctly, the tacit permission given to witches, so scandalous to all good Christians : though I tremble to think of it for my own interests. It is certain the British islands have always been strangely addicted to this diabolical intercourse, of which I dare swear you know many instances ; but since this public encouragement given to it, I am afraid there will not be an old woman in the nation entirely free from suspicion. The devil rages more powerfully than ever : you will believe me, when I assure you the great and learned English minister is turned methodist, several duels have been fought in the Place of St. Marc for the charms of his excellent lady, and I have been seen flying in the air in the figure of Julian Cox, which history is related with so much candour and truth by the pious pen of Joseph Glanville, chaplain to K. Charles. I know you young rakes make a jest of all those things, but I think no good lady can doubt of a relation so well attested. She was about seventy years old (very near my age), and the whole sworn to before Judge Archer, 1663 : very well worth reading, but rather too long for a letter. You know (wretch that I am) 'tis one of my wicked maxims to make the best of a bad bargain ; and I have said publicly that every period of life has its privileges, and that even the most despicable creatures alive may find some pleasures. Now observe this comment ; who are the most despicable creatures ? Certainly, old women. What pleasure can an old woman take ? Only witchcraft. I think this argument as clear as any

of the devout Bishop of Cloyne's metaphysics : this being decided in a full congregation of saints, only such atheists as you and Lady Fanny can deny it. I own all the facts, as many witches have done before me, and go every night in a public manner astride upon a black cat to a meeting where you are suspected to appear : this last article is not sworn to, it being doubtful in what manner our clandestine midnight correspondence is carried on. Some think it treasonable, others lewd (don't tell Lady Fanny) ; but all agree there was something very odd and unaccountable in such sudden likings. I confess, as I said before, it is witchcraft. You won't wonder I do not sign (notwithstanding all my impudence) such dangerous truths : who knows the consequence ? The devil is said to desert his votaries."

To Sir James Steuart

" Venice, January 13, 1759.

" I have indulged myself some time with day-dreams of the happiness I hope to enjoy this summer in the conversation of Lady Fanny and Sir James S. ; but I hear such frightful stories of precipices and hovels during the whole journey, I begin to fear there is no such pleasure allotted me in the book of fate : the Alps were once molehills in my sight when they interposed between me and the slightest inclination ; now age begins to freeze, and brings with it the usual train of melancholy apprehensions. Poor human-kind ! We always march blindly on ; the fire of youth represents to us all our wishes possible ; and, that over, we fall into despondency that prevents even easy enterprises : a store in winter, a garden in summer, bounds all our desires, or at least our undertakings. If Mr. Steuart would disclose all his imaginations, I dare swear he has some thoughts of emulating Alexander or Demosthenes, perhaps both : nothing seems difficult at his time of life, everything at mine. I am very unwilling, but am afraid I must submit to the confinement of my boat and my easy-chair, and go no farther than they can carry me. Why are our views

so extensive and our powers so miserably limited? This is among the mysteries which (as you justly say) will remain ever unfolded to our shallow capacities. I am much inclined to think we are no more free agents than the queen of clubs when she victoriously takes prisoner the knave of hearts; and all our efforts (when we rebel against destiny) as weak as a card that sticks to a glove when the gamester is determined to throw it on the table. Let us then (which is the only true philosophy) be contented with our chance, and make the best of that bad bargain of being born in this vile planet; where we may find, however (God be thanked), much to laugh at, though little to approve.

"I confess I delight extremely in looking on men in that light. How many thousands trample under foot honour, ease, and pleasure, in pursuit of ribands of certain colours, dabs of embroidery on their clothes, and gilt wood carved behind their coaches in a particular figure? Others breaking their hearts till they are distinguished by the shape and colour of their hats; and, in general, all people earnestly seeking what they do not want, while they neglect the real blessings in their possession—I mean the innocent gratification of their senses, which is all we can properly call our own. For my part, I will endeavour to comfort myself for the cruel disappointment I find in renouncing Tubingen, by eating some fresh oysters on the table. I hope you are sitting down with dear Lady F. to some admirable red partridges, which I think are the growth of that country. Adieu! Live happy, and be not unmindful of your sincere distant friend, who will remember you in the tenderest manner while there is any such faculty as memory in the machine called."

To the Countess of Bute

"Venice, May 22, 1759.

". . . Building is the general weakness of old people; I have had a twitch of it myself, though certainly it is the highest absurdity, and as sure a proof of dotage as pink-coloured

ribands, or even matrimony. Nay, perhaps, there is more to be said in defence of the last ; I mean in a childless old man ; he may prefer a boy born in his own house, though he knows it is not his own, to disrespectful or worthless nephews or nieces. But there is no excuse for beginning an edifice he can never inhabit, or probably see finished. The Duchess of Marlborough used to ridicule the vanity of it, by saying one might always live upon other people's follies : yet you see she built the most ridiculous house I ever saw, since it really is not habitable, from the excessive damps ; so true it is, the things that we would do, those do we not, and the things we would not do, those do we daily. I feel in myself a proof of this assertion, being much against my will at Venice, though I own it is the only great town where I can properly reside, yet here I find so many vexations, that, in spite of all my philosophy and (what is more powerful) my phelgm, I am oftener out of humour than among my plants and poultry in the country. I cannot help being concerned at the success of iniquitous schemes, and grieve for oppressed merit. You, who see these things every day, think me as unreasonable, in making them matter of complaint, as if I seriously lamented the change of seasons. You should consider I have lived almost a hermit ten years, and the world is as new to me as to a country girl transported from Wales to Coventry. I know I ought to think my lot very good, that can boast of some sincere friends among strangers."

Old age will, in the long run, have its way. Lady Mary, as pleasantly loquacious as ever, found the manual labour of writing not always to be endured, and she tried the experiment of dictating her correspondence.

" Thus far " (she wrote to Sir James Steuart from Padua, July 19, 1759), " I have dictated for the first time of my life, and perhaps it will be the last, for my amanuensis is not to be hired, and I despair of ever meeting with another. He is the first that could write as fast as I talk, and yet you see there are so many mistakes, it wants a comment longer than my letter to

explain my insignificant meaning, and I have fatigued my poor eyes more with correcting it, than I should have done in scribbling two sheets of paper. You will think, perhaps, from this idle attempt, that I have some fluxion on my sight; no such matter; I have suffered myself to be persuaded by such sort of arguments as those by which people are induced to strict abstinence, or to take physic. Fear, paltry fear, founded on vapours rising from the heat, which is now excessive, and has so far debilitated my miserable nerves that I submit to a present displeasure, by way of precaution against a future evil, that possibly may never happen. I have this to say in my excuse, that the evil is of so horrid a nature, I own I feel no philosophy that could support me under it, and no mountain girl ever trembled more at one of Whitfield's pathetic lectures than I do at the word blindness, though I know all the fine things that may be said for consolation in such a case: but I know, also, they would not operate on my constitution. 'Why, then' (say my wise monitors), 'will you persist in reading or writing seven hours in a day?' 'I am happy while I read and write.' 'Indeed, one would suffer a great deal to be happy,' say the men, sneering; and the ladies wink at each other, and hold up their fans. A fine lady of three score had the goodness to add, 'At least, madam, you should use spectacles; I have used them myself these twenty years; I was advised to it by a famous oculist when I was fifteen. I am really of opinion that they have preserved my sight, notwithstanding the passion I always had both for reading and drawing' This good woman, you must know, is half blind, and never read a larger volume than a newspaper. I will not trouble you with the whole conversation, though it would make an excellent scene in a farce; but after they had in the best bred way in the world convinced me that they thought I lied when I talked of reading without glasses, the foresaid matron obligingly said she should be very proud to see the writing I talked of, having heard me say formerly I had no correspondents but my daughter and Mr. Wortley. She was interrupted

by her sister, who said, simpering, 'You forgot Sir J. S.' I took her up something short, I confess, and said in a dry stern tone, 'Madam, I do write to Sir J. S. and will do it as long as he will permit that honour.' This rudeness of mine occasioned a profound silence for some minutes, and they fell into a good-natured discourse of the ill consequences of too much application, and remembered how many apoplexies, gouts, and dropsies had happened amongst the hard students of their acquaintance. As I never studied anything in my life, and have always (at least from fifteen) thought the reputation of learning a misfortune to a woman, I was resolved to believe these stories were not meant at me : I grew silent in my turn, and took up a card that lay on a table, and amused myself with smoking it over a candle. In the mean time (as the song says),

> 'Their tattles all run, as swift as the sun,
> Of who had won, and who was undone
> By their gaming and sitting up late.'

When it was observed I entered into none of these topics, I was addressed by an obliging lady, who pitied my stupidity. 'Indeed, madam, you should buy horses to that fine machine you have at Padua ; of what use is it standing in the portico ?' 'Perhaps,' said another, wittily, 'of as much use as a standing dish.' A gaping schoolboy added with still more wit, 'I have seen at a country gentleman's table a venison-pasty made of wood.' I was not at all vexed by said schoolboy, not because he was (in more senses than one) the highest of the company, but knowing he did not mean to offend me. I confess (to my shame be it spoken) I was grieved at the triumph that appeared in the eyes of the king and queen of the company, the court being tolerably full. His majesty walked off early with the air befitting his dignity, followed by his train of courtiers, who, like courtiers, were laughing amongst themselves as they followed him : and I was left with the two queens, one of whom was making ruffles for the man she loved, and the other slopping tea for the good of her country. They renewed their generous

endeavours to set me right, and I (graceless beast that I am) take up the smoked card which lay before me, and with the corner of another wrote —

If ever I one thought bestow
On what such fools advise,
May I be dull enough to grow
Most miserably wise.

And flung down the card on the table, and myself out of the room, in the most indecent fury. A few minutes on the cold water convinced me of my folly, and I went home as much mortified as my Lord E. when he has lost his last stake at hazard. Pray don't think (if you can help it) this is an affectation of mine to enhance the value of a talent I would be thought to despise; as celebrated beauties often talk of the charms of good sense, having some reason to fear their mental qualities are not quite so conspicuous as their outside lovely form. — *À propos* of beauties:

I know not why, but Heaven has sent this way
A nymph, fair, kind, poetical, and gay;
And what is more (tho' I express it dully),
A noble, wise, right honourable cully:
A soldier worthy of the name he bears,
As brave and senseless as the sword he wears.

"You will not doubt I am talking of a puppet-show; and indeed so I am; but the figures (some of them) bigger than the life, and not stuffed with straw like those commonly shown at fairs. I will allow you to think me madder than Don Quixote when I confess I am governed by the *que-dira-t-on* of these things, though I remember whereof they are made, and know they are but dust. Nothing vexes me so much as that they are below satire. (Between you and me) I think there are but two pleasures permitted to mortal man, love and vengeance; both which are, in a peculiar manner, forbidden to us wretches who are condemned to petticoats. Even vanity itself, of which you daily accuse us, is the sin against the Holy Ghost not to be forgiven in this world or the next.

Our sex's weakness you expose and blame,
Of every prating fop the common theme ;
Yet from this weakness you suppose is due
Sublimer virtue than your Cato knew.
From whence is this unjust distinction shown ?
Are we not formed with passions like your own ?
Nature with equal fire our souls endued :
Our minds as lofty, and as warm our blood.
O'er the wide world your wishes you pursue,
The change is justified by something new,
But we must sigh in silence and be true.

" How the great Dr. Swift would stare at this vile triplet ! And then what business have I to make apologies for Lady Vane, whom I never spoke to, because her life is writ by Dr. Smollett, whom I never saw ? Because my daughter fell in love with Lord Bute, am I obliged to fall in love with the whole Scots nation ? 'Tis certain I take their quarrels upon myself in a very odd way ; and I cannot deny that (two or three dozen excepted) I think they make the first figure in all arts and sciences ; even in gallantry, in spite of the finest gentlemen that have finished their education at Paris.

" You will ask me what I mean by all this nonsense, after having declared myself an enemy to obscurity to such a degree that I do not forgive it to the great Lord Viscount Bolingbroke, who professes he studied it. I dare swear you will sincerely believe him when you read his celebrated works. I have got them for you, and intend to bring them. *Oime ! l'huomo. propone, Dio dispone.* I hope you won't think this dab of Italian, that slid involuntarily from my pen, an affectation like his Gallicisms, or a rebellion against Providence, in imitation of his lordship, who I never saw but once in my life : he then appeared in a corner of the drawing-room, in the exact similitude of Satan when he was soliciting the court of Heaven for leave to torment an honest man."

CHAPTER XVII

LAST YEARS (1760-1762)

Lady Mary writes the history of her own times—Her health—Death of Edward Wortley Montagu—His will—Lady Mary ponders the idea of returning to England—She leaves Italy—She is held up at Rotterdam—She reaches London—Horace Walpole visits her—Her last illness—Her fortitude—Her death—She leaves one guinea to her son.

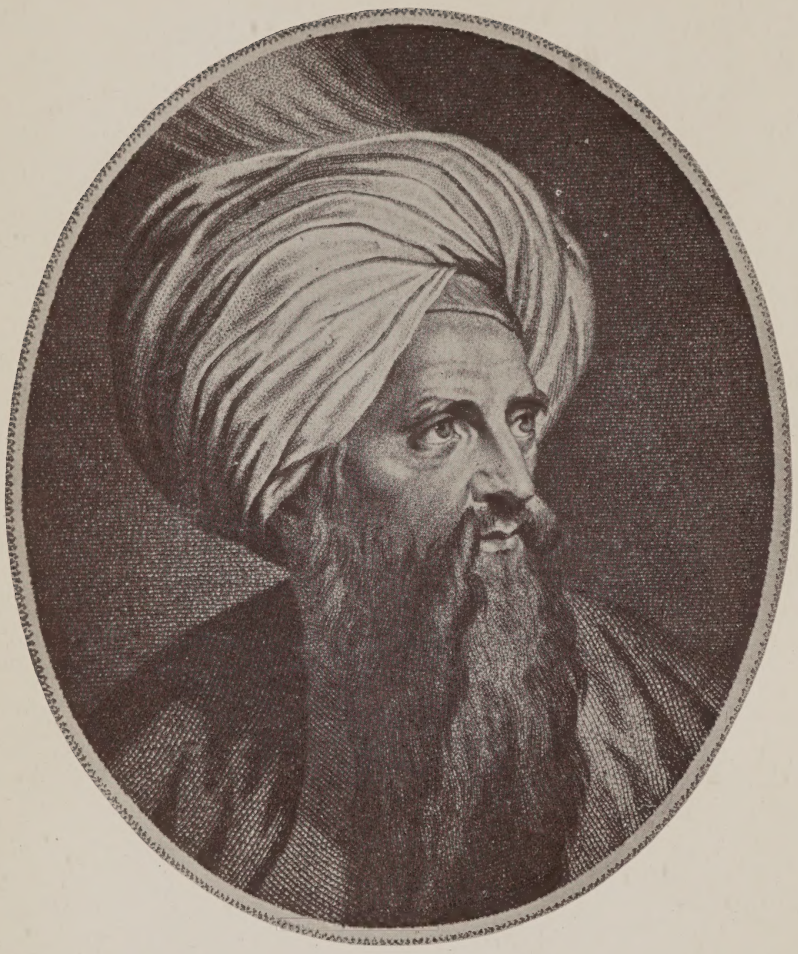
ONE of Lady Mary's amusements towards the end of her life was writing the history of her own time. "It has been my fortune," she said, "to have a more exact knowledge both of the persons and facts that have made the greatest figure in England in this age, than is common; and I take pleasure in putting together what I know, with an impartiality that is altogether unusual. Distance of tie and place has totally blotted from my mind all traces of resentment or prejudice; and I speak with the same indifference to the Court of Great Britain as I should do of that of Augustus Cæsar." Lady Mary, however, merely wrote for her own entertainment, and burnt her manuscript almost as soon as it was composed. It would certainly have made interesting reading; but she never had any idea of publication. "I know mankind too well to think they are capable of receiving the truth, much less of applauding it; or, were it otherwise, applause to me is as insignificant as garlands on the dead."

"I am exceedingly glad of your father's good health: he owes it to his uncommon abstinence and resolution," Lady Mary wrote to her daughter, April 11, 1759. "I wish I could boast

the same. I own I have too much indulged a sedentary humour and have been a rake in reading. You will laugh at the expression, but I think the liberal meaning of the ugly word rake is one that follows his pleasures in contradiction to his reason. I thought mine so innocent I might pursue them with impunity. I now find that I was mistaken, and that all excesses are (though not equally) blamable. My spirits in company are false fire : I have a damp within ; from marshy grounds frequently arises an appearance of light. I grow splenetic, and consequently ought to stop my pen, for fear of conveying the infection."

" My health is very precarious ; may yours long continue and see the prosperity of your family. I bless God I have lived to see you so well established, and am ready to sing my *Nunc dimittis* with pleasure," Lady Mary wrote to her daughter in November, 1760 ; and early in the next year she touched on the same subject in a letter to Sir James Steuart. " I have not returned my thanks for your obliging letter so soon as both duty and inclination prompted me but I have had so severe a cold, accompanied with a weakness in my eyes, that I have been confined to my stove for many days. . . . I am preparing for my last and longest journey, and stand on the threshold of this dirty world, my several infirmities like posthorses ready to hurry me away."

It was in January, 1761, that Edward Wortley Montagu passed away at the age of eighty-three. He died at Wharncliffe, the family seat of the Wortleys, where he had lived in a most miserly manner He had only one luxury—tokay, of which he was passionately fond. He left a great fortune, the highest estimate of which was £1,350,000. Horace Walpole said the estate was worth £600,000. Walpole gives some particulars of the legacies : " To his son, on whom six hundred a-year was settled, the reversion of which he has sold, he gives £1,000 a-year for life, but not to descend to any children he may have by any of his many wives. To Lady Mary, in lieu of



EDWARD WORTLEY MONTAGU, JUNIOR.

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dower, but which to be sure she will not accept, instead of the thirds of such a fortune, £1,200 a-year ; and after her to their son for life ; and then the £1,200 and £1,000 to Lady Bute and to her second son ; with £2,000 to each of her younger children ; all the rest, in present, to Lady Bute, then to her second son, taking the name of Wortley, and in succession to all the rest of her children, which are numerous ; and after them to Lord Sandwich, to whom, in present, he leaves about £40,000. The son, you perceive, is not so well treated by his own father as his companion Taaffe * is by the French Court, where he lives, and is received on the best footing ; so near is Fort l'Evêque to Versailles."

On hearing of the death of her husband, Lady Mary bethought herself of returning to England, from which she had been absent for more than a score of years. She was seventy-two years old, and may well have thought that her time, too, would soon come, and that she would like to die in her native country. Still, it was some time before she could bring herself to a decision to set out. She was delighted with the political success of Lord Bute and pleased with her daughter's prosperity, but " I am doubtful whether I will attempt to be a spectator of it," she confided in Sir James Steuart in April. " I have so many years indulged my natural inclinations to solitude and reading, I am unwilling to return to crowds and bustle, which would be unavoidable in London. The few friends I esteemed are now no more : the new set of people who fill the stage at present are too indifferent to me even to raise my curiosity." Also, as she said, she was beginning to feel the worst effects of age, blindness excepted, and was grown timorous and suspicious.

It was no light thing for a woman of Lady Mary's age to voyage alone, except for a servant or two, from Venice to London. Yet her indomitable spirit came to her aid, and in the autumn of 1761 she left Italy. She travelled by way of Augsberg and Frankfort to Rotterdam. The journey had been

* Theodore Taaffe, an Irish adventurer, who, with Edward Wortley Montagu, was imprisoned in Fort l'Evêque, at Paris, for cheating at cards in 1751. The incident has been given in a pamphlet written by Montagu.

far from agreeable. " I am dragging my ragged remnant of life to England," she wrote to Sir James Steuart on November 20. " The wind and tide are against me ; how far I have strength to struggle against both I know not ; that I am arrived here is as much a miracle as any in the golden legend ; and if I had foreseen half the difficulties I have met with I should not certainly have had courage to undertake it. . . . I am nailed down here by a severe illness of my poor Marianne, who has not been able to endure the frights and fatigues that we have passed."

When, about three weeks later, Marianne had sufficiently recovered to move on, Lady Mary was held up by a hard, impenetrable frost. The delay irked her, and she became somewhat depressed, and said that she was dubious, in her precarious state of health, whether she would arrive at her destination. At the beginning of the new year, she did actually make a start, and got half way to Helvoet, and was obliged to turn back by the mountains of sea that obstructed the passage. " I have had so many disappointments I can scarce entertain the flattering thought of arriving in London," the poor lady complained ; but she found comfort in that " It is uncommon at my age to have no distemper, and to retain all my senses in their first degree of perfection." Later in the month she arrived in London.

Horace Walpole, who heard everything, had, of course, heard that Lady Mary was returned to England, and in a letter of October 8, 1761, announced her return, adding with a brutality unusual even in him : " I have not seen her yet, though they have not made her perform quarantine for her own dirt." However, as he discovered shortly after, it was Lady Mary Wrottisley, and not Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who had arrived.

Of course, when Lady Mary had come to London, Walpole was one of the first to go and see her. " I went last night to visit her," he wrote to Sir Horace Mann on January 29. " I give you my honour, and you who know her, would credit me

without it, the following is a faithful description. I found her in a miserable little chamber of a ready-furnished house, with two tallow candles, and a bureau covered with pots and pans. On her head, in full of all accounts, she had an old black-laced hood, wrapped entirely round, so as to conceal all hair or want of hair. No handkerchief, but up to her chin a kind of horseman's riding-coat, calling itself a *pet-en-l'air*, made of a dark green (green I think it had been) brocade, with coloured and silver flowers, and lined with furs ; boddice laced, a foul dimity petticoat sprig'd, velvet muffeteens on her arms, grey stockings and slippers. Her face less changed in twenty years than I could have imagined ; I told her so, and she was not so tolerable twenty years ago that she needed to have taken it for flattery, but she did, and literally gave me a box on the ear. She is very lively, all her senses perfect, her languages as imperfect as ever, her avarice greater. She entertained me at first with nothing but the dearness of provisions at Helvoet. With nothing but an Italian, a French, and a Prussian, all men-servants, and something she calls an *old* secretary, but whose age till he appears will be doubtful ; she receives all the world who go to homage her as Queen-mother, and crams them into this kennel. The Duchess of Hamilton, who came in just after me, was so astonished and diverted, that she could not speak to her for laughing. She says that she left all her clothes at Venice. I really pity Lady Bute ; what will the progress be of such a commencement ? "

Lady Mary rented a house in Great George Street, Hanover Square, whither her daughter and grandchildren came often. Occasionally she went about, and from time to time would grace an assembly with her presence. Horace Walpole saw her at some gathering, dressed in yellow velvet and sables, with a decent laced head and a black hood, almost like a veil, over her face. His prognostication that she would by her interference and demands for " jobs " make life hideous for Lord and Lady Bute proved to be unfounded, and he had the grace to say, ' She is much more discreet than I expected, and meddles with

nothing " ; but he could not refrain from saying that " she is woefully tedious in her narrations."

Lady Mary was suffering from cancer, which she concealed from her family and acquaintances until about the beginning of July (1762). Then it burst, and there was no hope of her life being much prolonged. On July 2 she wrote her last letter to Lady Frances Steuart, saying, " I have been ill a long time, and am now so bad I am little capable of writing, but I would not pass in your opinion as either stupid or ungrateful. My heart is always warm in your service, and I am always told your affairs shall be taken care of." If she was a bad woman to cross, at least even on her deathbed she tried to do service to her friends. Death had no terrors for her ; she said she had lived long enough ; and she died, as she had lived, with great fortitude.

Lady Mary passed away on August 21, 1762, at the age of seventy-three. Her remains were interred in the graveyard of Grosvenor Chapel, where also lie Ambrose Phillips, David Mallett, Lord Chesterfield, William Whitehead, John Wilkes, and Elizabeth Carter.

All that Lady Mary possessed, except some trifling legacies, she left to Lady Bute. Her fortune is believed to have been inconsiderable, except for some valuable jewels. Walpole had one last gibe : " With her usual maternal tenderness and usual generosity, she has left her son one guinea.". The gibe was unworthy, because Walpole knew quite well the career of that son, who, anyhow, was sufficiently provided for. It may be that it was the pricking of Walpole's conscience for this last outburst that made him later administer a stern rebuke to Lady Craven. " I am sorry to hear, Madam, that by your account Lady Mary Wortley was not so accurate and faithful as modern travellers. The invaluable art of inoculation, which she brought from Constantinople, so dear to all admirers of beauty, and to which we owe, perhaps the preservation of yours, stamps her an universal benefactress ; and as you rival her in poetic talents I had rather you would employ them to celebrate her for her nostrum, than detect her for romancing."

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